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CHRIST SATISFYING THE INSTINCTS OF HUMANITY.

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BY

C. J. VAUGHAN, D.D.

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PREFACE.

THE first seven of these Lectures were delivered at a Special Evening Service on the Wednesdays in Lent. The eighth was preached on the Second Sunday after Easter, and is added to the series on the ground of the similarity of its subject.

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I.

CHRIST SATISFYING THE INSTINCT OF TRUTH.

JOHN XVIII. 37.

Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

THERE is a passage in the Prophet Haggai, in which, according to our Version, Christ is called *the Desire of all nations.*

It is possible that modern criticism may be right in giving a different turn to that text, and removing from it the direct promise of the Advent of Jesus Christ.

But no change of Version can rob us of the truth of which that text has been so often made the thrilling expression; that the longings of all hearts, consciously or unconsciously, are after Christ; that all races and ages, all conditions and characters, of the myriad family of mankind, have been, are, and shall be, crying out for that which Christ alone has to give them—the satisfaction of every want, and the rest of every roving.

Great men in all times have dealt with this subject: and yet there remains something, I hope, for lesser intellects to give to it: and I propose it to you as the thought for this Lent—how the Gospel is God's response to man's cry; how Christ Himself is the Satisfaction, let us rather say the Satisfier, of every Instinct of Humanity—proving Himself thus, to all who believe in a God living and feeling, the Saviour of Sinners, and the Light of the World.

There is a coarse and rough manner of stating the doctrine of human corruption, which is at least as unpersuasive as it is summary. Nothing is easier than to speak of utter depravity, universal ruin, absolute apostasy. And nothing is easier than to confess this—with or without feeling and earnestness. Yet this statement, thus expressed and there left, does not quite describe, does not at all account for, the phenomena (as we see them) of human life and human character. We do not find the world abstractedly and (as we speak) in cold blood preferring evil to good, applauding meanness and cowardice and malice and lust, or interchanging the terms good and evil in their application to vicious

actions and virtuous. Temptation, passion, self-interest, may blind a man to the colour of an action proposed to himself: yet even he will probably see its real colour on reflection; and even he, in his neighbour's conduct, if not in his own, will be quick-sighted to discriminate, and plain-spoken to denominate, the good and the evil.

We learn then to hold a somewhat more guarded, more thoughtful language concerning the state of Man in his Fall. We see him still made in God's image, not re-created in the likeness of the Devil. Herein lies the hope of his renewal. For the Devil, so far as Scripture says, there is no hope—because evil has become his good. For man there is—because the temple, though in ruins, is still God's, and the stones are lying ready for a Divine Workman and a glorious reconstruction. Each separate stone—by which we mean now such things as faculties, feelings, impulses, aspirations—each separate stone is still beautiful: the absence of God is the ruin: if God re-enters, it may be again a complete temple still. Every niche has its idol, seemly or obscene, decent or hideous, as the case may

be: if these can be put away, and God replaced where He ought to be, as the Occupant, as the Deity, of each, then may the Fall be reversed, and man himself become again God's temple.

Each part of man has a use and an abuse. Each faculty, each desire, each motive, each affection, is either good because rightly, or bad because wrongly, directed. Consequently it will be one of the surest signs—perhaps, of all signs, the most decisive—of a Saviour's presence, that He has in Himself the fulfilment of every want, and the satisfaction of every instinct, which, before and without Him, was either pining for its good, or poisoning itself with its evil.

To show how our Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name we have been worshipping, satisfies this condition of *Him that should come*, is a glorious office: it is that which these Lent Lectures, now first undertaken in this ancient Church, have in their view: may God supply the deficiency of the Minister, and give some here present cause to remember with thankfulness the Church of the old Temple and the Lent services of the year 1870!

Our subject this evening is—

Christ satisfying the Instinct of TRUTH.

Does any one challenge the expression—Instinct of Truth? Does any one speak of an opposite tendency, that of falsehood, as the instinct of fallen humanity? We grant that he would have much to adduce, both of argument and evidence, on that side. *David said in his haste—I say deliberately*—the words occur in a famous Parliamentary speech of some forty years ago—*All men are liars. I have seen an end of all perfection*, said the Psalmist again: *The children of men are deceitful upon the weights, they are altogether lighter than vanity itself.*

The world is full of falsehood. The very framework of Society rests upon a thousand semblances and false assumptions. Few lives are without a crack, a flaw, a vein of alloy: if the head of the man is of gold, still the feet are too often, like those of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, *part of iron and part of clay.*

But, for all this, we deny that the instinct of falsehood has superseded in fallen man the instinct of truth. Society could not exist, if, whether in speech or in action, truth were not more probable, in any given instance, than false-

hood. Suspicion is not reason. There is falsehood enough in the world to necessitate caution: there is still an overplus of truth sufficient to justify confidence.

We shall view this Instinct of Truth in two aspects, and show how Christ meets and satisfies both.

1. There is, first, an instinct of *knowing* truth. It is in human nature to crave satisfaction of knowledge.

We see this in very low and mean examples. Curiosity is natural. To hear and to tell some new thing occupies other places besides ancient Athens. A tale of wonder—a story revolting in every detail—a trial which shocks every pure feeling—finds ten thousand readers who have no motive in the study but bare vulgar curiosity. Even minds which have no appetite for sin—even minds which hate and loathe the thing revealed—will read, and justify the reading, from a mere thirst of knowing.

This is the twist which the Fall has given to the instinct of knowledge. It is the very snare by which man fell. The tree forbidden and fatal was the tree of knowledge of good

and evil; of evil directly, and then through this, by contrast and contrariety, indirectly of good.

But there is an instinct underlying this—not corrupt, but wholesome. The desire to know the highest truth is an instinct. To be informed about God—to know for certain what He is, and where—what His will is, and how I may approach Him—whether He feels for me, and whether I may love Him—the Fall did not destroy this pure instinct: overborne, clogged, buried, it is not eradicated: in an age of multifarious excitement, of universal movement intellectual and physical, of perpetual unrest and clamorous business, there is still room for new faiths, new creeds, new religions—in which though many *run to and fro* in a spirit of idle speculation, yet many also are actuated by a sincere desire to know for themselves, to know as a Life, Him that is True, for hope here and for rest hereafter.

That sort of guessing and supposing which is the amount of Nature's help towards this knowledge, is felt by multitudes—felt, probably, at certain times, by all—to be as unsatisfactory

as it is partial. *Let me not think, but know,* is the instinctive cry, when the subject of God is forced upon us by pain, by sorrow, or by impending death.

There are, indeed, many counteracting influences which tend to slake in us this thirst for God.

Indolence, taking refuge ever in the thing at hand—in the received opinion, in the traditions and conventions of others, in the plausible and probable rather than in the thought-out and ascertained—is one of these.

Another is Prejudice—never so strong as in matters at once the most important and the most mysterious—never so jealous as where there is most at stake and least in sight—never so sensitive as in a region in which change involves both effort and singularity, and unsettlement itself is at once distressing and dangerous.

There is yet a third antagonist to the instinct of Divine knowledge—Formalism; dwelling much on the necessity of embodying devotion—of taking sense with us into the thin air of the spiritual—of making sure of something where

all may evaporate into mysticism, and of doing God honour in that framework of matter which is assumed to be most real because it is most substantial.

Such influences have a direct tendency to dull, without satisfying, that natural thirst which God has implanted in us, and which even the Fall has not extirpated, after an eternal life which is (in other words) the knowledge of Himself.

But I appeal to you, my brethren, whether any of these influences, or all combined, can carry into your soul the slightest real comfort in those emergencies of which all, sooner or later, must have experience—the consigning of loved friends to death—the looking death in the face as a foeman menacing *you?* There is an instinct not thus to be appeased, which demands to know in whose hand is life and death—what He is to me, and whether I am aught to Him.

Christ says in the text that every man in whom this instinct of truth is—*every one,* He says, *who is of the truth*—will hear His voice; that is, will recognize in His Gospel the true, the satisfying response.

We may suggest two reasons for this, out of many.

(1) First of all, He speaks with authority.

There is something in the *Verily, verily* of Jesus Christ, which has a ring of certainty.

It is not every positive man who convinces. Sometimes we are roused into opposition by an overweening confidence of assertion. Positiveness is sometimes the mask of weakness, the stimulant of suspicion. It was not so with Christ. The commonest people felt that there was a difference between Him and the Scribes in this matter—of authority. You have all noticed, in the department of science or literature, how convincing is the voice of a man who thoroughly knows his subject. Contrast the lecture of a real master with that of a smatterer in science: his manner may be gentler, his admissions of difficulty humbler, his expressions of doubt here and there simpler and more earnest, than in one of less than half his knowledge: and yet you feel, as you listen, that that man has been where he is carrying you; his voice falters not, neither does his step vacillate, because he is (as we say) at home in his subject

—he comes to you from the things he tells of, he would take you back with him into the bosom of the mysteries which he reveals. Such, even such—with reverence be it spoken—is the manner of Jesus Christ in unfolding to us the deep things of God. There are subjects which He expressly tells some of His hearers that they cannot yet comprehend; He tells one that he is too earthly, too prejudiced, too sinful, to receive the saying—another, that, while he looks for human praise, while he seeks this world's glory, he cannot expect admission into the Divine Interpreter's house; says very remarkably, with respect to one mysterious topic, the time of the end, that He Himself, the Son, the Revealer, as such, knows it not. But these things rather heighten than lower our estimate of the authority of the teaching. One who can thus distinguish the capacities of His audience and discriminate the purposes of His commission, inspires just that feeling which is demanded in His own memorable words—*Verily, verily, I say unto you, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen....No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even*

the Son of Man who even on earth *is still in heaven.* A man eager for Divine knowledge, seating himself at the feet of Christ as his Teacher, will find here that satisfaction which the instinct of truth craves in him—because he recognizes here no conjectural, no traditional, no tentative doctrine, but the word of One who can say, *This is true*—I know it, because I have seen it where knowledge is intuition—seen it in the bosom of God, seen it in the counsels of an eternal age.

(2) There is a deeper reason behind.

Christ satisfies the instinct of truth, by not only speaking but being it. He says of Himself, *I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. I am the Truth.* Only in a Person can the instinct of truth be satisfied. The knowledge of things, even if those things be essences, even if God be their Author and heaven their home, is not the knowledge for which the soul is athirst. Not the knowledge of a book, not the knowledge of a science, not the knowledge of Theology nor of Divinity nor of Deity, can fulfil the saying, *He that drinketh of this water shall never thirst—it shall be in him a well of water*

springing up into everlasting life. The knowledge of a Person, in whom all truth centres, and from whom all truth radiates with light and warmth to every point of the circumference of the being—this alone can satisfy the instinct of knowing, and this is that which distinguishes the Gospel of Christ from every other religion or (so-called) revelation—namely, that it offers to us a Person, Divine at once and Human, in whose exhaustless infinite love the soul may bask and revel with a perfect reciprocity of love for love.

2. The day and the season make another application of the Instinct of Truth more appropriate still. We have spoken of its direction towards knowledge—of the instinct which would know truth. Let us speak, now, of the instinct which prompts towards the *being* true, and show how Christ meets and satisfies that.

We are aware that there are men who dread truth when it touches and concerns them. Just as a man may prefer carrying about with him the suspicion of some fatal malady, to running the risk of making suspicion certainty by going to a physician famed for his diagnosis, so is it

in things spiritual. We would rather leave in doubt the extent of our danger—in other words, the nature and degree of our own sinfulness—than incur the alarm of the discovery, and the responsibility of the cure.

This indisposition to truth and plain dealing is occasioned by many things.

Timidity has a large share in it. There is an impression that certain sins are unpardonable and incurable; that there is a kind of guilt, or a length of careless living, which must fix us outside the gate of mercy—concerning which, therefore, we may as well be ignorant as desperate—tranquil in self-deception, as tormented before the time.

Mere procrastination has much to do with it. Anything which involves serious exertion, not least if it be in the soul, is deferred by choice till a more convenient season—a season always *a little beyond.*

And there is, thirdly, that innate gambling spirit of human nature, which loves the excitement of chance in all forms, and which (terrible to say it) would even lay a wager with itself as to the issues of eternity and the destiny of the soul.

These powers are mighty, and they work in thousands and millions of the fallen—postponing the call of repentance from Lent to Lent and from decade to decade of years, contradicting, certainly, but not disproving, the assertion of this evening, that there is, nevertheless, in us, an instinct of being true, not more in the certainty of the knowledge than in the sincerity of the character.

(1) We have touched upon the desire, which is in all the healthy, to see themselves as they are—the first step, obviously, towards being true. How does Christ satisfy this?

First, by removing the question altogether from the province of innocence. His message is to the sinful. He comes not to call the righteous. It is a question, then, only of degree, between one who comes to Him and another. The fact of sin does not repel Him. It is not my being a sinner which makes me unsuitable. It is because of sin that He came. It is because a man is sinful, that he wants Christ and that Christ speaks to him. And as Christ does not say, I came to save *such and such* sinners —men who had sinned just thus or exactly thus,

not men who had gone beyond this point into gross, into heinous transgression—but rather showed, when He was upon earth, by word and deed, that He had a message and a hope and a healing hand for persons most deeply corrupted—therefore He encourages us to look thoroughly into our own case, and not be afraid, inasmuch as each discovery of sinfulness is also a discovery of need, and none can take us beyond the reach of His compassion and of His grace.

Indeed He expressly encourages us to be entirely frank with ourselves and with Him. He connects growth in grace with that growth in self-knowledge which is true humility. He Himself, though He knew no sin, was, above all other things, meek and lowly in heart—and He made this a chief, a chiefest point, in those who would follow Him into His glory. Thus in all ways He encourages that truth of *being*, which must be, first and above all, a truthfulness of *knowing*.

(2) But He stops not here. A man might pervert this sincerity of self-knowledge into an indolent acquiescence in the state known. He might say, If I only continue true in my self-

confession, there is no great danger in remaining as I am. Therefore Christ goes on to appeal to the instinct of *being* true; warns us that in all conflicts between knowing and doing there is not only inconsistency, there is also hypocrisy; a man cannot divorce principle from practice —cannot say, ever so openly, *This is right, but I do it not; this is wrong, but I do it*— without introducing into his life a radical falsehood, made only the more glaring by the avowal of the discord. Christ says, *Be true*—and He interprets this to mean, Walk in the light with a brave, a resolute consistency. It is not true, to say, *I see the light, but I turn from it*—that is the unblushing avowal of a double life.

There is in all men by nature a horror of hypocrisy. In treating this as the one despicable detestable vice, Christ appealed to an instinct of truth which has survived the Fall. Thus He drew to Himself all that is sound and honest and noble, and, in demanding truth as His one condition, proved also His own adaptation to the instinctive demands of those whom He came to save.

My brethren, even in this matter of truth

we cannot deny that there are natural differences, of more than degree, between man and man. No one can have taken part in the work of Education without being aware that there are some dispositions prone to falsehood, and other natures headlong towards truth.

In one there is the open brow, the stedfast eye, which meets you with an unshrinking confidence, and at all costs, of reproof or punishment, will *constantly speak the truth.* In another, there is that downcast, evasive, skulking look which baffles your enquiry and repels your trust. Often, if we knew all, we might read the explanation of this last in some physical weakness, some injudicious nursery management, or some precocious initiation into evil, which has crushed down the nobler impulse, and made timidity the law of the young life. Great *then* becomes the responsibility of the onward training—how to give back the courage, without some fatal addition of folly or indulgence—how to say, *Be true,* without saying also, *Be careless*—how to stimulate the instinct of honesty, without rendering the future character bold neither to fear God nor regard man.

There are others, we might almost say, too true: in their dread of insincerity, they will accuse themselves of faults not theirs: or they will hold a language of sweeping self-condemnation, where it were juster and more hopeful to paint less darkly and more minutely.

Some, in their zeal for truth, have been even hurried into a premature, a fatal denial, of that which Christ brought to us as the Truth. Dreading the reproach of an unrealized, a traditional faith, they have boldly thrown away, half in impatience, half in insolence, every revelation of the Gospel, comforting themselves, in their bleak disconsolate destitution for an hour of death and for a day of judgment, with the reflection that at least they are not hypocrites—at least they are honest men. God keep us all from this sort of devil's sincerity, which, to avoid the risk of credulity or the reproach of inconsistency, will even fling away, in one, all the hopes and all the promises of Him who calls Himself the Truth—of Him who, if ever there was a true man on earth, was true, and who says, with a response, all along the ages, from the truest heart of humanity, *To this end was I born, and*

for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth:—every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

The great subject is but touched upon—slightly, coldly, with miserable imperfection—but the time warns me that I must leave it here. On future occasions we may hope to dwell on other instincts of our nature which find their satisfaction in Jesus Christ. For the present, let us end with the exhortation that we rest not in idle acknowledgments of Christ's claim upon us, but press forward to know Him for ourselves, as the home of all wanderings, the rest of all anxieties, the satisfaction of all wants, the object, divine at once and human, of all conscious and unconscious longings. In all that He reveals, in all that He offers, in all that He commands, He appeals, not to imagination, not to superstition, not to fear, not to self-interest—He appeals to an instinct of truth within us, and says that, if we have it, we shall hear His voice. We shall recognize the voice of Him who made us in His own image—that image of

which the first feature is truth, and the second is truth, and the third is truth. Study Him, seek Him, speak with Him—and see if there grows not within you, by degrees, the conviction accompanying salvation—

In Him, the Word made flesh, God Himself tabernacled among us—and we still behold His glory—full of grace and TRUTH.

II.

CHRIST SATISFYING THE INSTINCT OF REVERENCE.

JOHN XX. 28.

My Lord and my God.

THIS is worship. He who offered this offered worship. He who accepted this accepted worship. It is one of those passages in which the inference of Deity rises into the assertion of Deity. There is no escape from the conclusion, save in some such evasion as indeed heaps insult upon injury—insult to the understanding upon injury to the soul. When the Apostle, doubting and convinced, uttered these memorable words, as he knelt before Jesus, *My Lord and my God*, he was not uttering an exclamation, at once irreverent and irrelevant—he was not, like some profane swearer, calling God to witness his astonishment or his awe—any more than St Paul, in the famous text of his great Epistle, was merely uttering an exclamation of praise and thanksgiving, when he said, *Of whom, as con-*

cerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. In both cases it was the distinct ascription to Christ of the attribute of a true Divinity.

In like manner, when the holy and devout Saviour, who was jealous beyond all men for God's honour, instead of reproving this utterance—instead of saying, like one of his Apostles when the knee was bent to him, *Stand up, I myself also am a man*—not only accepted the homage, but went on, by implication, to rebuke its tardiness—He was accepting, He was claiming, the acknowledgment of His proper Deity: He was declaring Himself, in the language of this evening's thesis, to be the appointed Satisfaction, to be the personal Satisfier, of the human Instinct of Reverence.

Reverence is a word by itself. It has no synonym. It is not respect—it is not regard—it is not fear—it is not honour. Awe, perhaps, is nearest to it—yet not equivalent. It would be inaccurate language, or else unworthy feeling, to apply reverence to wealth, or rank, or power. If we reverence the possessor of one of these, it must be for something (real or supposed) over

and above this possession. There are indeed three qualities, or three characteristics, still human, to which we might, with no abuse of terms, apply it—age, royalty, genius—these three: yet even its application to these gives the hint of its distinctiveness: it is because in each of these, to minds rightly constituted, there is a touch of sacredness, of sanctity, almost of divinity; and therefore, where it would be vulgar and grovelling to reverence the adventitious advantages of title or property, it is not mean, it is rather noble and lofty, to recognize here a superiority not of station but of kind.

Reverence is the sense of something or some one essentially (not accidentally) above us. Old age stands above us, in the two incommunicable sanctities, of an ampler experience, and a nearer heaven. Royalty stands above us, if not always in the personal qualities of the ruler, yet in the theory, itself well nigh instinctive, of a divine commission and a theocratic representation. Genius stands above us, in the possession of an original originating intuition—a thought put into the heart, and an idea which is to be a voice for mankind. On these accounts, we

place them where we place only the sacred, and suffer respect, in these rare exceptional cases, to pass into awe, into veneration, into reverence. Reverence we define as a sense of superiority, not accidental, but essential. We feel reverence only for the sacred—for that which is, or which has touched, the Divine.

This reverence we have called an instinct. There might be much to advance, in these days —let us not be hard upon them, in all days— in support of an opposite theory—of an instinct of irreverence. The insolence of lusty youth, the insolence of clever shallowness, the insolence of a smattering science and a smart volubility, denies admiration, refuses alike wonder and respect, to everything; can see in religion only a sentiment, and in this anxious sorrowful human life only a topic for sarcasm or ridicule. Such a spirit may be common—prevalent in literature, predominant in society—it is no instinct: even in fallen nature it is a corruption and a degeneracy: any soul in which it has settled itself is at least as unmanly as it is ungodly.

Man, worthy of the name, has always something above him; in other words, something to

reverence. He cannot live without it. There is but an alternative. The man who has nothing else above him has self; that ugliest, most obscene, of deities—Belial and Mammon and Beelzebub in one. Self is the deity of millions—and its worship is as vile, as brutalizing, as ever were the rites of Chemosh or Milcom or Ashtaroth. In general, even fallen man has something besides self above him: even where self presides in the worship, it is still rather as priest than idol. Reverence is an instinct.

It is easy, indeed, to misdirect, to misapply it. Man feels himself little. Feels himself an atom in a mighty system. Cannot so much as add one cubit to his stature. Cannot so much as regulate his health, or will to live one day or one hour to secure a fortune or to save a throne. Is evidently dependent—say, upon chance—say, upon destiny—say, upon a living, guiding, moving Will. Certainly is not independent: still less, powerful—if by power is meant ability to do that thing which is not greatest but least. O there must be something above me—and what?

In the absence—conceivable, though never actual—of all information concerning this power

above, we can understand the impulse of which the mighty Lawgiver speaks so impressively—to connect human fortune, human destiny, with those celestial bodies which evidently preside, instrumentally if not independently, over the day of labour and the night of repose, over the climate which influences, and the food which nourishes. *Take good heed to yourselves*, he says—as though the temptation will be strong—*lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun and the moon and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them*—driven, in the destitution of another deity, and in the strong resistless compulsion of the sight and sense of these. The instinct of reverence enforces a worship: beneath God, what worship like this?

The days of idolatry, so styled and self-styling, are gone by for us: yet even for us the instinct of reverence may be as misleading as potent.

There are those, in this time, who reverence Nature. We have made allowance for Sun-worship—we can make allowance for this. How natural, when the life is given, in philosophic

devotion, to the study, the contemplation and arrangement, of physical phenomena—when the observation of law has become the business, and the admiration of order the enthusiasm, of an intellect keen and inquisitive, and a life blameless and tranquil—how natural, I say, that the feeling should take possession, "Everywhere system reigns—law is another name for deity —I cannot believe in those jerks and freaks of miracle by which revelation would correct and readjust discord, I cannot accept an Incarnation which contradicts nature, or an Inspiration which would supersede thought—let me spend my little lifetime in tracing and tracking the footsteps of the Eternal, convinced that, though I may not live to *find out God,* it is in the investigation of His orderly workings that the sublime discovery of the Infinite One shall eventually be achieved. Meanwhile in awe and wonder, in toil and self-abasement, I will bow myself before the Unknown God, to be absorbed, my little race run, in that all-embracing all-nurturing Life which has doubtless a satisfaction for every seeker and a home for the smallest tiniest thing created."

This is reverence. This is no shallow, self-conceited, arrogant vaunting, such as dabblers in science are known by—such as the Church too often imputes to a philosophy sorrowful in its humiliation. The instinct of reverence is here—only it has not yet found its Lord and its God!

But indeed, brethren, the instinct of reverence is everywhere—testifying, sadly and touchingly, to the want which Christ came to fill.

What else is that creature-worship, of which images are but the coarse repulsive caricature, but which reigns in every noblest nature till the Creator enters to set His throne there? Which of you has not felt his whole soul drawn out in tenderest emotion towards some one whom he has arrayed in every vestment of beauty? How has he felt within him that thrill of mesmeric sympathy which knits two souls into one, and makes existence insufferable without the loved one! How has he refused as a lie, resented as an insult, every slightest gentlest imputation upon the perfection of the idol! How has he loved to picture to himself some future day—to come, or not to come—more often not to come—when

co-existence shall be ecstasy and earth heaven! Ah the sad awakenings, to find the idol, some dark day, broken to pieces by the ruthless hand of irreversible exile, or (sadder, sadder still) by the blasting explosion of the imagined faultless perfections!

Nor do the misdirections of this instinct of reverence cease always when at last God becomes the Object. That which before was idolatry may now become superstition. It is not enough that God be nominally known, or that God's service be outwardly enterprised. Now first comes into operation a new risk. We may be confident that we are right, because creature-worship, in its last-mentioned form, is renounced and put away, and the life is given to that religious aim and purpose which must surely be the highest, the purest, that can occupy the energies of a soul born for immortality. And yet, my brethren, it is quite possible, if the Scripture, if Christ and His Apostles, be listened to, that a life busy about God may never see and never know Him. There is a charm for some minds in the elaboration of Church-architecture, Church-decoration, Church-

music. They love to see everything decorous, seemly, reverent, in the conduct of worship. They love the proprieties, the sanctities, of the place where (as they fearlessly apply the words) *God's honour dwelleth.* They grudge no expense of money, of exertion, of self-denial, in maintaining worship, ministry, ritual. Reverence is their ideal. With them, to treat a consecrated building as common, to turn the back upon an altar, to drop one crumb of the sacramental bread, to omit the lowliest prostration in the presence of the Eucharistic cup, is a profaneness of the deepest dye. If any one dares to enquire, "Is this the reverence which God accepts? is this sort of reverence so much as named in the Gospel? does it so much as bear upon that spiritual service which Christ speaks of as alone accepted? may there not be a superstition in this multiplication of new objects of awe—in this exaltation, into the first rank of duties, of ceremonies and postures unknown to the Law, twice unknown to the Gospel? in short, is there any virtue of reverence except towards God, and may you not be in danger, thus, of *giving His glory to another?*" such questions would

be received with disgust and abhorrence by thousands of our fellow-Churchmen; and if we press them, it must be because we deeply feel the magnitude of the interests at stake; because we see that a Christianity of which these should be features would be but a parody and travesty of a true-hearted and onward-looking Judaism —a returning to the shadow when the substance is come—a going back from the spirit which quickeneth, to the flesh which profiteth nothing. Reverence is an instinct—but an instinct, like all instincts, of ambiguous virtue, inasmuch as God has revealed to us its proper object, and God is dishonoured by its promiscuous application. *God Himself is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.*

Let us turn to the combination this night proposed to us—

Christ satisfying this Instinct of Reverence.

And let us earnestly pray Him, as we presume to speak a few commonest words on this mighty thesis, to dip them in that *unction of the Holy One* which makes the Name of Jesus *as ointment poured forth!*

The instinct of Reverence is abroad in the

earth, seeking its object. It finds it not in an idea or an abstraction. Nature cannot satisfy it. It may be a grand thought, that I am part of a system—that I am one smallest tissue or fibre of a frame which is the universe and of which the breath is Deity. Yet I—little insignificant I—find not my rest nor my goal in this vastness. I feel in myself—I cannot help it—something which, if insignificant, is important too—if trifling in the aspect of immensity, is yet feeling, vibrating, suffering—and, if worth creating, perhaps worth satisfying.

I go forth abroad amongst my fellows. I feel myself drawn, by a magnetic attraction, to this beautiful form, to that magnificent mind, to that loving spirit. I cannot help loving. I cannot check reverence. Yet, even as I gaze, the bright illusion vanishes: when I try to grasp, I have embraced a phantom. Man separates—God separates: soon there is nothing—nothing but a fathomless abyss and a great gulf fixed.

Shall it be always thus?

I see an end of all perfection. And yet there is in me an idea of perfection—yea, an ideal perfection—might I but attain to it.

Is there none such among existences?

Yes—I know there is God—the Infinite, the Eternal, the Self-existent.

Yet when I go forth after Him—and by day and in the night-watches my soul thirsts for Him—I feel myself in the land, not of shadow, but of things too high for me and too vast. Cannot I get nearer than this? closer, closer yet, until I touch and feel and handle? must I for ever be thus lost in infinitudes and essences? is there no flesh and blood to which I may draw nigh and devote myself?

Multitudes, multitudes, have no human end and goal of being. Lonely people, disconsolate disappointed souls, throng the highway and the thoroughfare of this being. What shall they do? Celibate souls, widowed souls, souls unloved, and perishing for lack of love—is there for them no possible love, no practicable union, such as shall draw forth and return every affection, stronger than death, more absorbing and more lasting?

And when God comes to us, and says, I am thy Love—must we then be for ever illuded and mocked by forms and shadows? shall the

love which God offers be a thing of tapers and censers, of genuflexions and crossings, of tangible sacraments and sensuous images? Shall I never see the Invisible, and never touch the Divine?

My brethren, it is to answer these questionings and such as these, that our Lord Jesus Christ comes forth from the excellent glory, takes our nature, obeys, suffers, loves, wrestles, dies in our nature, then takes it back with Him into a world no longer of shadows and unrealities, and bids us follow Him back thither with a love as devoted as it is unidolatrous. The Gospels are written to make Him real to us. We see Him there tried in every possible manner, as at this season—fighting in the desert with beasts and devils, meet emblem of the life which He took upon Him—bearing not only contradiction but neglect—not only pain, but monotony and dulness—living for long years, living till within three years of His death, in a village, in a cottage, in a shop, drawing no eyes, commanding no attention—at last coming forth from obscurity, but only to be homeless, despised, rejected; only to be scourged and buf-

feted and spitted on; only to be crucified, then dead, then buried. You may see Him, as He toils along this humble desolate path, in every variety of association and circumstance: you may see Him a child, a boy, a young man: you may see Him tried, tempted, provoked, outraged: you may see Him, in that wonderful mirror, that unprepared uncoloured glass of Scripture, just as He was: you cannot doubt that you see there the real thing, the very Man —can you refrain—beloved brethren, can you refrain—from adoring? Is not that Person what none other Person can be to you—not admirable only, but adorable? Can you help worshipping? Can you see there any speck, any flaw, any alloy, in the perfection? Is He not very Man? Is He not very God? Do not your knees bend instinctively? Does not your soul bring forth in His honour the gold and the frankincense and the myrrh which once it tried, tried in vain, to offer to another—finding its gold there become dross, its sweet odours savourless there and scentless?

Then the question remains—the only question—Can this one heart contain all the devo-

tions, all the adorations of all men? Can this one Person have room to receive, have love to return, all the love, all the devotion, of every land and race and clime? Can I be sure of attention in that admired, that adored of the nations? Can there possibly be for me, sinful man, weak woman, little child, a response and an echo for my tiny tribute of worthless self-dedication? O if there be, I will seek none else—I will go no further—for here indeed is an exhaustless perfection—here is an object, not worthy only, but exhaustive!

And so, when Jesus Christ stands and says, *If any man thirst*—not, If the world wants an object—not, If philosophers or great men and kings feel, after trying everything, that there is still an unsatisfied longing for Me—but, *If any man*, rich or poor, wise or ignorant, young or old, blameless or sinful, *If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink*—when He thus answers the only possible question, and claims to have a heart large enough and an affection warm enough for all and for each—surely, my brethren, we cannot resist this? We cannot say, We do not want, and He does not say, You

cannot have! Let us bring to Him this night the cravings and the yearnings, the wants and the woes, the misgivings and anxieties, of all these hearts: let us spread them before Him, let us ask Him to take and to satisfy and to find place for them, day by day, hour by hour, in that heart of which the life-blood was once drained for us: yea, let us say this night in His hearing, Long have I roamed, Lord, athirst and hungry—often have I hewed for myself some broken cistern, and when I tried it, when I poured everything I had into it, it could hold no water—Lord, I come to Thee! If Thou hast an ear for little woes, if Thou hast a heart for poor insignificant people, if Thou art indeed not only the Desire of Nations but the Man of Sorrows and the Sinner's Friend, then shalt Thou be my Refuge and my Fortress, my Life and my Saviour! And when Thou sayest, *Reach hither thy finger and behold My hands—thy hand, and thrust it into My side—be not faithless but believing*—I will answer and say to Thee, all doubting for ever silenced, the instinct of the soul's reverence in Thee satisfied, *My Lord and my God!*

III.

CHRIST SATISFYING THE INSTINCT OF PERFECTION.

MATTHEW V. 48.

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

THERE is a strange melody in the sound—a combination (if the phrase might be pardoned) of discords into a harmony—let it fill the ear to-night! The sinner, man, is bidden to be perfect: and that, not in any dwarfed or stunted sense of perfection, such as might bring it down, or half way down, to his level, and then flatter him with the idea, that, considering all things, he is not so far short of the ideal of his humanity: not thus—on the contrary, he is to be perfect as God is perfect: nothing less or other is the scale and the standard: it is not enough, the context says, to aim at a human perfection, a perfection which, at the utmost, you will share and divide with your fellows: high above this, far above out of your reach, yet still the only limit (if limit it can be called) of your moral,

spiritual, Christian ambition, towers the perfection which your Master proposes to you—

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

There are doubtless many considerations by which the precept is to be guarded, and we shall not close, for this evening, without adverting to them. But they scarcely affect the leading idea. No moralist, no theologian, before Christ, ever ventured, probably, upon such a direction. Visionary, fantastic, presumptuous, almost blasphemous, would it have seemed to any merely human teacher. By straining too severely (he would have said) the bow of effort, you may crack, snap, shiver it. Aim at the possible, and something—aim at the impossible, and nothing—will come of it.

My brethren, our Lord Jesus Christ knew better what was in man—and here, as everywhere, He proves Himself a Master. What He appeals to in this precept is an instinct—one of those natural instincts which He came to satisfy—the Instinct of Perfection.

Start not at the word. Point not to a condition very far gone from original righteousness;

IV.

CHRIST SATISFYING THE INSTINCT OF LIBERTY.

LUKE IV. 18.

To set at liberty them that are bruised.

THERE was nothing fortuitous in Christ's choice of this His first text at Nazareth.

The occasion was a marked one. None could forget it. The reappearance, as the Messiah, of One who had lived in that place for thirty years as *the carpenter's Son*—His *standing up to read* in the Synagogue where He had so long worshipped, and to which He returned, from His Baptism and from His Temptation, in the new character of *Him that should come*, Israel's Hope and Rest and King—awakened what would now be called a profound sensation in that far-off town: all eyes were upon Him, as He took from the attendant the roll of Isaiah's Prophecies, and turned, in calm self-possession, to those first three verses of the 61st chapter, describing what should be the work and office of

the destined Redeemer and Saviour of Man. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because He hath anointed me*—hath made me His Christ —to fill a certain specified office towards Him and towards the work of His hand. It scarcely needed that He should say what was the application. *This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.* The audience felt, as he read, that the text said so.

My brethren, the text would not have said so, or would have said it in terms defective and ambiguous, if, professing to describe Messiah's office, it had left one word out. There is one instinct, so deeply planted in the heart of mankind, that the Desire of Nations must satisfy that if He would do anything. That instinct is, the Instinct of Liberty. The great English Advocate calls Liberty *the last and best gift of God to His creatures.* He might with equal justice have called it *the first:* for never was there the day when man, created in God's image, lacked this first point of likeness—save indeed in that one sense in which, as we proceed, we shall see that liberty must be limited, if it would not ruin, if it would not die; the one

prohibition was no mark of serfdom: the forbidden tree was God's witness: in the same degree, it was the memento of man's dignity and man's God-likeness.

The Instinct of Freedom is strong in the fallen. It has lost the dew of its youth: it has been coloured, adulterated, debased, by that taint, poison, vice, of sin, which has been the curse of the Adam race since the first transgression: but it is there—moving, working, for good and evil, from youth to age: its struggles are the agonies of life, its triumphs are the glories of history.

The first impulse of the infant—its puny impotent wrestling with the hand which guides and supports, which dresses and washes—is an impulse towards freedom. The first ambition of the child is independence—to be permitted, in the small matters which make his life, to dispense with help, to exercise will, to practise for manhood. Trace it onward through the young life—it is still the motive power, the moving spring. It is this which makes the home often troublous, the school sometimes rebellious: it is this which renders authority irksome to the

high-spirited, and sends many a *younger son* with or without his portion, on his experimental journey into the *far country.*

Yet could any count the Instinct of Freedom a mere thing of degeneracy and the Fall? Can any forget that to this same impulse we owe every successive step towards a humane code and a constitutional throne? that to this Instinct of Freedom is due not only the wild breaking of fetters, which may issue in a more cruel binding—but also that noblest most unselfish self-sacrifice by which philanthropists and men of God battled out, till they achieved, emancipation —because they felt the Instinct of Liberty strong in themselves, and because, as Christians, that which they would have, they were bound also to bestow.

Liberty, in God's sense, is not more the right, than the necessity, of His creature. If there is to be a moral nature, there must be freedom to use it. A being, good by compulsion, is not good. A man, or an Angel, robbed of free will, is but an automaton taught motion, or a devil under chain and key. Any system of religion which denies, or practically denies, freedom, takes away

with it responsibility, and (under a just God) precludes the judgment. Whatever difficulties, mysteries, contradictions, impossibilities, may seem to be involved in the combination of grace and free will, we must bear them, we must suffer them, as we may—for neither of the two can be parted with, and neither may be explained away. Man is free, or God is unjust who punishes.

And we feel this. We complain of the force of temptation, of the weight of evil influence, of the bondage of our lives to evil—yet, even while we thus speak, something says inwardly, *And yet thou art free.* No man forced thee to think that thought, the acting of which was sinning. No man has access to that innermost council-chamber in which the will, calling to its deliberations the appetites and passions on the one hand, and such advisers as it has, in the form of religion, principle, fear, hope, duty, on the other, issues its fiat or its injunction, and sets the man in motion this way or that. We complain of bondage: but the bitterest ingredient in that wail is the innermost consciousness that the slave is the arbiter too; that, though the action may be that of a fool or a madman, still it was

done not under compulsion, or only under that sort of compulsion which grows out of a feeble purpose and a perpetual yielding.

As there is an idle lamentation over the personal bondage, so also there is a mischievous setting aside of the individual freedom in the discipline of others, whether in Education or from the Pulpit. It is the dream of some educators, that to watch is to secure. To keep an Argus eye upon every movement in play or study—to have a Dionysius ear open to every unguarded unsuspecting utterance in the walk or upon the bed—this is to educate! So shall the forthcoming of evil be absolutely precluded, until that day arrives (as if, with such an education, it could ever arrive) when, the principles being fully formed, and formed all for good, there shall be no danger in freedom and no alternative of evil. Utter, futile folly! shamed and exposed, again and again, in a thousand effeminate manhoods and ten thousand disconsolate homes. God has implanted in His creature an Instinct of Liberty; not to spring full-grown and full-armed out of a sudden burst into manhood—but to be recognized, respected, trained, from

earliest childhood, into careful use, into safe maturity.

Nor is the educational insult to liberty very much more perilous than the theological. The doctrine of grace is sometimes so preached as to draw from the half-listening hearer the exclamation, Then, if God will, I shall be saved—and, whatever I will, I may be lost. *Who hath resisted His will?* and what is the creature that he should will before the Creator? Hence an idle dreamy peradventure of grace in the few—a waiting for days and influences which may come or not come—meanwhile, a practical subjection to each passing whim of inclination or wind of influence, a course never set towards heaven, and a sail never filled by God's Spirit. Hence, in the many, a practical disregard of all religion, as a thing either silly or weakening—unfit for men of strength, to be relegated to the studies of priests or the latest emergencies of a deathbed. God has implanted in us all an Instinct of Freedom—and they who would guide others, they who would regulate themselves, must take account of it as a fact and as a responsibility.

Yet this instinct, like others of which we have spoken before it, may be misdirected. Liberty is not license. It may be made so. We all know what a thirst for freedom may become, in a home, or in a state; in an undutiful son, a mutinous soldier, or a rebel democrat. These fields of discourse are too wide for us this evening. Let us come to possibilities which lie nearer. Let us view the abuse of liberty (so called) first in the mind, and secondly in the life, and see how that condition may arise in either, of which Christ spoke when He roused the indignation of His hearers by offering to make them free. Liberty abused, whether in mind or in life, is the vilest bondage.

(1) Take the case of what is called free thinking. Let us compliment it with its own title—free thought. The idea is attractive. Let us fling away our fetters, and expatiate in an intellectual liberty. Away with the traditions of an old-world system—away with an antiquated psychology and a conventional religion. We will enter upon a new career—the world of mind open before us, and nothing accepted which we have not first proved. The Instinct

of Liberty is strong in us, and it forbids all restrictions upon the exercise of the individual understanding.

The phraseology is not new, but it has its charms for many. Without saying that the eccentricities of this age are greater than those of any former century, or that the perils of this vague thinking are more serious than they have been to generations now laid on sleep—being rather inclined to believe that there is nothing new under the sun, in either world, whether the world of thought or the world of action—we may yet remind those who listen to such suggestions, that there is a liberty of thinking not at all more irreligious than it is irrational, and that it becomes us to take good heed lest in discarding prejudice we cast away with it three important aids to sound thinking—good sense, experience, and perhaps the voice of God. We do not bid you to think in chains: but we must bid you to be careful lest you forge for yourselves new chains—amongst which may be those three most galling fetters, vanity, insolence, and a passion for paradox. *Art thou the first man that was born? or wast thou made before the*

hills? Hast thou heard the secret of God? and dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself?

We touch here upon a vast subject: this whole course of Lectures would not exhaust it. We are confined to one glimpse, one fragment: yet, in speaking of abuses of liberty, of the slaveries of freedom, we could not quite pass it by. Earnestly, affectionately, would I entreat any young men in this Congregation who may have been caught by the promises of liberty, or (quite as probably) by the prevalent sneers and scoffs at that mental servitude which is often assumed to be synonymous with religion, to take this, for what it is worth, into their reckoning—that, as no one mind can contain, much less discover, everything; as moral qualities have evidently much to do with intellectual results; as we are evidently surrounded by mystery, whether we will or no, at least as much in nature, and in the mere secret of life, as we can be in the world of religion and of the soul; so our fear for you is, not lest you be too free—you cannot be too free—but too narrow, too bounded, too one-sided, too partial, in your thinking; lest you should leave out considera-

tions which philosophers know ought to be taken in; lest you should draw illogical conclusions from hasty premises, and so miss altogether the truth which you are even honestly seeking; lest you should become slaves to your own impatience, your own self-confidence—be not angry if I say, your own ignorance—and so in the great emergencies which you cannot expect to evade, suffering, sorrow, death, find that you have missed the freedom you sought, and must begin, in haste and distress, to exemplify the image of the old despised Parable, and ask oil for the lamp of your hope from those who have but just enough for their own.

You perceive that it is not liberty which we grudge you—not freedom of thought—but rather a new and an unconscious bondage. We would urge you, in setting out on your search for novelty, first to define to yourself liberty. It is not liberty to be uncontrolled in error. It is not liberty, whether moral or mental, to be left to think all the follies and believe all the falsehoods which imagining or guessing may run to. It is liberty, to shrink from no investigation because it is forbidden, and to rest in no conclusion because

it is prescribed. It is liberty, to take with us every part of the man in our search, and to give to every fact and every argument its due weight and its calm consideration. The liberty of which we speak is not the license of one part—it is the orderly proportionate working of all powers and faculties towards the search and grasp of the truth.

(2) If there is thus an abuse of freedom in thinking, what shall we say of living? Many young men—many older men with them—think it liberty to live as they will. They have said—to adapt the Psalmist's striking figure—My tongue and my hand, my health and my wealth, my body and my life, each is my own—*who is lord over me?* Who has a right to interpose, if I waste my substance, if I indulge my passion, if I trifle with my character, if I fling away my opportunity, if I even sully another's conscience or destroy another's happiness? I hate, I despise the leading-strings of duty: I will live as I list, and take my chance for the rest. Or, if a more decorous, a less reckless language be mine, at least I will confess, with more or less of contrition, that such or such an indulgence, not ac-

cording to right, has an irresistible charm for me—resolve against it as I may, blame myself as I must, I yet cannot turn away from it—and, after all, that which nature prompts, God must wink at.

Such thoughts, breathed in a thousand hearts, influencing a thousand lives, have in them just a scent and a perfume of that Instinct of Liberty which is our this night's subject: but who does not see the truth of that interchange of terms by which our Lord called this kind of freedom bondage, saying, *Verily verily I say unto you, He that committeth sin is the slave of sin?* Can that poor victim of drunkenness or overmastering lust —or that other, still prospering, not yet marked victim—delude himself into the idea that he is free, when, night after night, he perceives himself dragged back, by a force not less tyrannical because it is inward, towards that street or that house where he has sinned a hundred times before, and knows perfectly well—yes, even if he resolved, even if he prayed, before he started—that he will sin again as sure as he crosses the threshold this evening? Do you call that liberty? Well wrote St. Peter of such free-

dom, *While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption—for of whom* (or *of what*) *a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. He that committeth sin is the slave of sin.* And yet here, as in the former case, it is the Instinct of Freedom which has forged the chain. As there is in each human heart an impulse towards, and a thirst after, liberty, so is that desire no warrant, but the contrary, of its fulfilment, so long as man is left in his Fall, so long as Christ has not entered his life, to *set at liberty them that are bruised,* and *to preach the acceptable year.* He, He alone, can satisfy the instinct of Freedom.

Think of this in three ways.

1. First, He sets the example of liberty.

It may have occurred to some of us, that our Lord, stooping to be incarnate, and designing to take our nature not in its more exalted but in its humblest form, yet did not, in point of fact, either suffer every form of trial—sickness, for example, bereavement, old age—or know the lowest degradation of humanity, captivity or servitude. St Paul says that He *took*

to a languid acquiescence, more common than the opposite, in vice and ruin; to a torpid conscience, a weak will, a practice falling ever below principle, and a principle itself most inadequate to the requirement of a perfect virtue. We have said of other instincts, and we say it of this, that the Original Sin (as we term it), that bias and taint which is in us from the Fall, consists not in the extinction, but in the misdirection, of impulses and affections given us in creation. That which ought to be God's is given to the creature—love and trust, adoration and obedience, the worship of the heart, and the service of the life. So is it with each instinct. But the Instinct is there—not destroyed, only waiting for its Object. And when the Desire of Nations shall come, He will prove Himself such not least by this—that He comes not to destroy, but to fulfil; not to choke or strangle the affection, but to give it an Object which shall make the crooked straight, and the rough ways plain —famine abundance, and desire satisfaction.

There is an Instinct, then, amongst others, of Perfection. We see this in everything.

We see it in the little pastimes of children

playing in the market-place—practising their baby-games, and never resting till they can catch upon their battledore their fifty or their hundred. We see it in the cricket-field and on the rifle-ground—we see it in the hunt and at the billiard-table: what time, what toil, what patience, what disappointment, is grudged if at last there may be perfection?

We see it in the young scholar's devotion to his reading, to his composition. Some may study, some may compete, for the sake of the prize or the emolument, for the fame or the advancement. But we do a great injustice if we doubt that hundreds of the nobler youth of England would toil equally and struggle equally for the mere sake of knowing and of being. Who has not felt—who, I mean, worthy to be called a scholar—the vexation of being baffled by a difficult piece of construing, the remorse—I can call it nothing less—of a mistake in that last exercise, which will haunt him like a ghost and oppress him like a nightmare? These things are workings, in small departments, of the Instinct of Perfection: Christ disdains them not—He appeals to them!

What is it which makes the great advocate, the eloquent orator, always tremble before speaking, and oftentimes lash himself afterwards? This too is not all of vanity and greed of praise; this is not all of eagerness to display self, and mortification if the display be unsuccessful: much more is it, in real men, because there lives and glows in them, like a consuming fire, the ambition of perfection—a perfection which they never feel themselves to attain, just because nothing short of perfection will satisfy them. So is it with every painter, sculptor, writer, poet, who has in him that spark of genius by which art works and thought breathes. The instinct here *is* the genius: it makes the very difference between mediocrity and greatness.

What is it which makes the mathematician exact in his calculations, and count a life-time not wasted in the discovery of one smallest phenomenon in God's august world of the sky? He knows that, however it may be where man works—however it may be in the case of trade or commerce or manufacture—at least where God is directly engaged, there will be, there must be, exactitude: one misreckoning or mis-

calculation may disarrange, for purposes of science, the system of a universe: he can offer nothing short of Perfection on that Altar where Philosophy officiates before a God *not of confusion!*

But what else is it which gives its impulse to trade, and makes all the difference, in that occupation of the million, between success and failure, between eminence and stagnation? The bad tradesman—you may know him by it—sees nothing insufferable in imperfection, and thinks his customer unreasonable if he looks for the absolute. *It will do* is his motto: *it will do* if the colour almost matches, if the dress nearly fits, if the dropped stitch, if the accidental flaw, can scarcely be noticed:—you know that that workman cannot rise, will always be outstripped, must come to want—why? because he has no instinct of perfection, and therefore he lacks the first requisite of attainment.

On the other hand, so strong is this motive in the body of human life, that you will find men engaged in large transactions willing to pay almost any price for a scarcely appreciable improvement in the screw of an engine or the

catch of a machine—just because it is an approach, next to imperceptible, towards a perfection which real men of business never despise, and which therefore the ingenious never find unremunerative.

So much is this principle a part of our nature, that you may safely predict, concerning everything—except indeed that one mystery of life and death of which the Creator keeps the key—concerning everything short of this, that the existence of a want is the prophecy of a supply, and the observation of the imperfect a proof that the perfect is on its way. Do you suppose that the living of half a century hence will be satisfied with that dim murky obscurity which we now call the lighting of these streets of London? Do you doubt that some nearer approach to an imitated daylight will be the appliance or the discovery of another generation? And why do you not doubt this? Because there is in men an instinct of Perfection, and the possession of this instinct is the guarantee of progress.

Nor is this true only in mechanical things. It is true socially. No doubt there are counter-

vailing forces, of habit and indolence and (above all) selfishness, which may interpose long years between the notice of an abuse and its remedy. But the same instinct of Perfection warrants us in connecting together, by a sure anticipation, the two words *exposure* and *correction*. An average life-time is fertile in the experience. Instances are innumerable. Each age marvels at the supineness of the last. That marvelling is the utterance of the Instinct of Perfection. An imperfect thing is a doomed thing. It must be amended—or it must go. There is no third alternative. It has been so with prison horrors. It has been so with madhouse horrors. It has been so with Education abuses. It has been so with workhouse abuses. It has been so with the great giant shadow of slavery. It will be so—none can doubt it—with the physical and moral pestilences bred in cellars and garrets and styes fit only (if fit) for brute habitation, yet tolerated in Christian England as the teeming reeking homes of God's poor. These things go, by turns and degrees, when the light is let in upon them. Why? Because God has implanted in us, as one chief part of His own likeness, the Instinct

of Perfection—and it cannot dwell, knowingly, for long, with the debased, no, nor with the imperfect.

Would that we could speak with equal emphasis of the action of the same instinct upon the character and soul of the man! Those counteracting forces of which we have said that they impede social improvement, work with tenfold energy here. How different would human life be, if in each human life the Instinct of Perfection were indeed quick and strong! It is here that our Fall is felt. It is in that feebleness of the motive of a seen and sought perfection—it is in the willingness to dwell with the imperfection, the reluctance to grapple with it, the faint-heartedness of the hoping and the effeminacy of the struggling—it is in this that we find out the broken spring, the fatal flaw and crack which runs through the fallen: in the same degree, it is in this that we find out our need of Christ, and learn to hail Him as the Rescuer and Deliverer of the helpless.

But, my brethren, be not unjust to your fellows—nor untrue to yourself. There is on this earth—there is in these lives, or lives like

these—a vast, a mighty warfare waging, even with the power that holds us bound. Could we look within, and see, where God sees them, the sorrows and battlings of human souls, even before Christ comes to them—could we trace, but through one day, the efforts of thousands, not yet Christians indeed, to keep down temper, to resist sloth, to refrain from violence of speech and action, to chain up unruly desire, and to make some approach, however distant, to what is conceived (however erroneously) as the perfection meant for them—we should understand that, even in the individual, even in the moral aspect, the Instinct of Perfection still is, and still works—though much of its toil and suffering is wasted, for lack of a truer aim, for lack (above all) of an alone effectual strength.

We must not be detained longer from the direct thought and sight of Jesus Christ. Our subject is not, the Instinct of Perfection—but Christ satisfying that Instinct. In weakness and unworthiness, but in His strength, let us ponder these three things concerning Him—

1. Christ embodying Perfection.

There is one fatal bar to Perfection—an im-

perfect model. It is so in all things. It is so in Art. It is so in Education. It is so in Morals. You may copy perfectly a faulty picture—the result is imperfection. You may have a master whose every precept you hang upon: you may be an apt, a too apt pupil: your composition may be the very pattern of his, to the phrase and to the accent: yet it is bad Greek, bad poetry, bad taste—because his was no better. We come at last to place not lowest among preceptors those who cannot indeed teach but who will let learn. There are many who do neither. Some of the greatest scholars have been pupils of inferior masters: this was because the master had the good sense to stand out of the light, and just stimulate the industry which he could not direct. But it was not teaching. It was not satisfying (even in poor human things) the Instinct of Perfection.

So has it been in higher matters. The want of a model, or the presence of a faulty model, has been ruin to many good intentions. Not to speak of directly evil example—which seldom really overbears the voice of conscience, and never can altogether shift the responsibility from

the imitator—how often has a vision of personal perfection flitted before the waking eye of a well-intentioned disciple—how many foolish things have been taught and echoed in Christian sects about a sinless or at least unsinning obedience —simply for want of attention to a really perfect model as set before us in the Life and Character of our Lord Jesus Christ! Look on that Picture—mark that Instructor—study that Mind —and afterwards, if you can, dream of yourself as perfect!

The Instinct of Perfection craves its realization: and, inasmuch as Christ would satisfy, He first embodies it.

I shall not carry you to-night round the circle of His human-divine perfections. I will rather content myself—the time necessitates it —with repeating His own challenge, *Which of you convinceth me of sin?* I will not dwell in detail upon the various features of His character, nor try to show how nice was the balance, how beautiful the self-correction and mutual compensation (so to speak) of His several attributes. Gentleness never running into weakness —tenderness never losing sight of holiness—

personal endurance ever combined with protective strength, and the deepest sympathy with the sinner ever set side by side with the sternest abhorrence of the sin. No painter ought to represent the countenance of Jesus—some have presumed to do so even upon the Cross—as soft with a childish softness and delicate with a woman's delicacy: when we are speaking of Him as embodying perfection, we must be careful to remember that the perfection of a man contains in it not sympathy only but earnestness, not love only but (in this bad world) indignation too; and therefore we read, as one ingredient of the perfection—and read with satisfaction—looks of anger at hypocrisy, and words of scorching fire against treachery and cruelty—terrible exposures of sleek malignity, and judicial sentences upon long pretentious prayers by devourers of widows' houses.

2. I would carry you on from Christ embodying to Christ exhausting perfection.

It is a difficult, a critical part of our subject: yet in it lies a large portion of its persuasion.

To hold up before us a mirror of divine glory, and bid us by that reflection to shine—

has in it a touch of discouragement as well as of hope. The imitation of Christ, standing alone, paralyzes even more than it edifies. Volumes have been written upon Christ the Great Example; age after age has added to them, and will add, without exhaustion; and yet in all these we see an element of sadness, even of indolence, for men such as we are.

There is another side of the truth, not to be viewed alone, yet, in its place, full of profit: and that is, Christ completing, consummating, exhausting perfection; Christ containing in Himself all perfection for each and for all; Christ Himself having ready, having accomplished, having entire, for me and for all men, the sum of all that perfection in which all may stand faultless and blameless before the throne and before the tribunal. *Ye*, St Paul says, *are complete*—it is the same word, *perfect—in Him:* and when he speaks of his own aim, and of his own hope, it is, that he *may be found in Him* —within, inside, covered over and hidden and lost in the folds of that white robe and in the recesses of that spotless righteousness.

We know that many things have been writ-

ten not according to truth, and understood not according to wisdom, and used not according to holiness, concerning the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless the idea is a scriptural idea, and in its place is both wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort. The moment a man believes—surrenders himself, heart and soul, for life and death, to Christ—he is invested with that perfect perfection which Christ has in Himself for all men. He has not to struggle after an impossible attainment: he is not left to be a creature of shreds and patches, of specks and spots, when God visits him, when judgment overtakes him: he is safe: he has passed from death unto life: he is inside the Perfect One, and he is complete, he is perfect, in Him. Christ not only embodies, He also exhausts perfection. Before He sets us upon obeying, He first perfects us in Himself.

And thus a solid foundation is laid for that doctrine of humility which makes one element of perfection to be a sense of imperfection. *Let us therefore,* St Paul says, *as many as be perfect, be thus minded:* and the mind of which he speaks is this, *Not as though I had attained, or*

were already perfected. The man complete in Christ can view without dismay his personal incompleteness: he can throw off all from himself, and rest his every hope and his every trust upon the exhaustive perfection which wraps him round.

3. But once more—and without this the thirst of perfection would remain still unsatisfied—besides the embodiment, and besides the exhaustion, there is also the injunction of perfection; and it is given in the brief saying of the text—

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

It is well that Christ should embody perfection, it is well that Christ should exhaust it. Thus He breathes confidence: thus He forbids misgiving. If I die to-night, I am safe, because Christ is perfect, and I am complete in Him. But this protective, enveloping, vicarious perfection, though it is delightful as a trust, would be unsatisfactory, would be even injurious, being alone. The soul born of God aspires after His likeness. The soul taken into Christ would be like Christ. The soul rescued from death would

also live; live, not only in the sense of freedom from condemnation, but in the strength also of a new vitality, in virtue of which it shall find itself able to withstand, able to work, able to love. Tell me how this shall be, the soul cries to the Invisible, and I shall know by that sign that I am born of God.

I feel within me an Instinct of Perfection. Progress is the law of being. Low as I am sunk in grace, weak as is my endeavour, miserable my attainment, I cannot rest where I am: is there hope for me of running a real race, of reaching a real goal, of grasping a real holiness?

Christ answers, There is. Christ sets before us a precept, not of progress only, but of perfection; bids us contemplate God—not in His Power, not in His Wisdom, not in His Immensity or Eternity or Omnipresence, but in that one only attribute in which He humbles Himself to us, unwearied inexhaustible Love—love to the evil and to the good, love to the just and to the unjust—and in that one point, itself a life, bids us to be perfect as God is perfect.

Does it disappoint any one to hear that the

precept, the precept-promise, of Perfection, is all contained and consummated in the one word, Love? Where is the duty, to God or man, which Love contains not? Where is the knowledge, where is the devotion, where is the enjoyment, which lies outside Love? What happiness is comparable to loving? What motive rouses, incites, stimulates, like loving? What rest of the whole being, what tenderest softest strongest re-creation, has not its source and its home in Love? What impulse sends forth the holy Angels on their ceaseless offices of personal ministration? What makes holy men, holy women, count no toil burdensome, no zeal fantastic, in the service of God and His Church? What drew forth Christ Himself from the everlasting home of His holiness and of His glory? What but Love? In that one grace lies all grace, all energy, all perfection. In it alone—in it on earth progressively, in it at last in heaven perfectly—may we all regain the lost image, the forfeited likeness, of Him, whom to know is to live, whom to serve is to reign!

upon Him the form of a servant (*slave*); but this must have meant *slave* in the sense of *creature—slave* in that sense in which every created being is the possession, is the property, of God the Creator—for Christ as a Man was personally free.

The answer is not doubtful. Christ could not, in slavery, have accomplished His mission. He must have uncontrolled power of willing and acting; else He could not either have taught or ministered—could not have *gone about doing good and healing*. But there is a further reason. Christ would take human nature in its simplicity, not in its artificiality. Slavery is an unnatural state; a departure from God's original making: in due time, it would have passed as it entered—while it lasted, the slave was Christ's freedman, and Christ Himself would only comfort, only ennoble him, with a spiritual grace in which bond and free are one.

Christ Himself was free. And free with what, with how satisfying, a freedom! View it as you will—in any aspect.

View Him as morally free. With how lordly a supremacy did He tread under foot tempta-

tion! Not without feeling it. He was in all points tempted. And the tempting was no unmeaning phantom trial. Yet how thoroughly, in each point, in its subtlest, most seductive, most sublime, most Scriptural disguise, did He prevail and conquer! *Which of you,* He could say to His gathered bitterest foes, *so much as reproveth me of sin?*

View Him as spiritually free. In all His devotion there was not one trace of formalism. His long nights of praying were evidently from the love of it. His treatment of forms was at once reverent and discriminating. To place a form above a charity, to regard ritual as competing with mercy, to scruple about a Sabbath when disease was in sight—this was impossible—because Christ was free. *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice,* was the motto of His religion. The letter was to Him nothing when the spirit was involved.

View Him as socially free. With what a dignified equality He moves amongst rulers! See him at the tables of the rich—see Him amongst priests—see Him before Caiaphas's, Pilate's, Herod's judgment-seat—what liberty!

what freedom of thought and speech—yet giving to each his due! *Thou sayest that I am a King* —yet what King? *To this end born*—in this sense a King—not come to reign—come *to bear witness unto the truth!*

View Him, yet once more, as consciously free. Free to will and to do. Free to choose His times and His seasons; to stay here, and go there, according to His will; to live while it is His day, and, when night comes, to lay down life. If Herod menaces, He sends back word that *to-day and to-morrow and the day following* He shall be busy in His work and in His journeying: not one movement will be changed, not one hour's occupation will be shortened, because of a royal threatening: all is arranged, all is ordered: His is the freedom of a conscious protection, the liberty of a sovereign will!

The example and specimen of liberty is in Christ.

2. Again—and yet more briefly—Christ brings the doctrine of liberty. It is one of the names (St James uses it) for the Gospel, *the law, the perfect law, of liberty.* And St Paul, contrasting the Law and the Gospel, says briefly,

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Liberty from the bondage of ritual. Liberty from the bondage—a heavy bondage once—of the letter; of a formal, external, ceremonial system: God keep us clear from it, even with Christ! Liberty from a servile spirit in a Christian form; from that view of God which regards Him as ever grudging our happiness, burdening our conscience, inspecting and judging rather than sympathizing and loving, bidding us contract, abridge, mutilate our enjoyments, instead of *giving us all things richly*, and *having pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.* Love God, Christ says, with all your heart—and then walk before Him without fear all the days of your life. *Ye have not received a spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received a Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

3. But what were the example, and what were the doctrine of liberty, if Christ brought not also the gift—the very gift itself—of a perfect freedom?

We will cease now from method and system—the time is exhausted—and press you, my brethren, to take this latest thought home. *The*

Son, He says Himself, *shall make you free.* His audience started at the sound. *Made free?* What are we taken for? Bondmen—slaves? Abraham's seed—never in bondage (Egypt and Babylon and Rome forgotten in their self-conceit) —and Thou sayest, *made free?* Yes, He says, made free. The sinner is a slave. You, if you yet know not the truth—if you have not experienced the emancipation of Jesus Christ—are a slave, however free. You cannot will, of yourself, not to touch again the accursed thing. That hasty temper, that angry feeling, that hot revenge, that sinful passion, that maddening drink, that cherished vile affection—are you its master, tell me, or its slave? When you do the thing your conscience condemns, when you leave undone the thing which duty thunders in your ear ought to be done and that instantly—which are you? master—or slave?

Shall it be always thus? Shall we live thus, and die? or only cease to sin when disease palsies or tortures, and the appetite for sinning is dead within? and shall we then, with a few half-meant, half-unmeant prayers, prayers against sins which we did and cannot do, prayers for par-

don and grace which we refused while we could sin, hope to pass into the eternal presence, and to stand acquitted before the great white throne?

Why will ye die?

The Example, the Master, is the Giver, too, of Freedom. The Son can make you free. He, sought this night with simple earnest entreaty, can take out of your heart the slave's aversion, the slave's cringing, the slave's grovelling thraldom—by breathing into you the blessed thought, *If any man thirst—if any man sin—whosoever will—let him come—let him drink—let him live!* And if, so coming, he will stay; if, finding peace once, he will come for it again; loving Him who first loved—loving Him for His death, loving Him for His life—then shall he be His disciple indeed: the Spirit of Christ, which is liberty, shall abide in him for ever: he shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall set him free!

V.

CHRIST SATISFYING THE INSTINCT OF COURAGE.

1 CORINTHIANS XVI. 13.

Quit you like men.

IN the Greek the text is one word. *Be men.*

St Paul here appeals to an instinct—and that instinct is Courage. He tells his readers that, in becoming Christians, they do not cease to be men; that there is an instinct of manliness, and that Christ came to satisfy it.

He addresses himself alike to man and woman: for in Christ Jesus *there is neither male nor female.* We do not call a woman's perfection manliness. We do not think that woman will ever find her crown—though she may seek it—in quitting her privacy, and usurping the functions of statesmen, of orators, of professional workmen. We incline to think that, in grasping at power, she will lose influence; and that, though the novelty may dazzle for a moment, in the end the performance will disappoint the

promise. We would read the text, then, in a form applicable to all: it has an application to all, as soon as for the four words, *Quit you like men,* we substitute, as we purpose to do this evening, the one equivalent word—*Courage!*

Courage lies midway between timidity and recklessness. In matters of spirit and daring, there is a deficiency, which is cowardice—and there is an excess, which is foolhardiness.

Timidity is common. Many shrink from pain: many fly from danger. Terrible scandalous cowardice is shown every day in the yards and alleys of London: men will stand by and see an animal tortured or a woman beaten. Which of us has not spent days and nights of apprehension, before the slightest, the most instantaneous operation? Which of us—to change the subject abruptly—has not kept silence, again and again, when, for modesty, for religion, for truth, he ought to have remonstrated—because he feared the contempt of the contemptible, because he was afraid of a man that shall die, more than of God that must judge?

Foolhardiness is common. What mad prank cannot the schoolboy be dared to? What folly,

what trifling with limb or life, has not been made irresistible by the silly taunt, *You dare not?* Who has not been oftentimes culpably indifferent to health, to influence, to character, if inclination spoke, and said to one man, Go, or to another, Come?

Often the foolhardy is a coward too. The man who will undermine his constitution by excess, and drag death towards him with a cart-rope by his vices, is afraid of infection if his friend is stricken with fever, and will make any excuse for *passing by on the other side* the stranger *fallen among thieves.*

Nevertheless, we refuse to either of these—we refuse to cowardice, we refuse to recklessness—the sacred name of an Instinct. They are perversions, distortions, of Nature: Nature is brave.

No man ever heard of the nation, of the society, of the heart, in which cowardice was honoured. Greeks and Romans had but one word for *courage* and *virtue.* The soldier who has refused service in the trenches, or thrown away his colours in the battle, had better not return—whatever his rank—to face the opinion

of his country, of his county, of his home. The man who has been driven by selfish terror to leave wife or child a prey to violence or fire, will find himself, for the rest of his days, by no sentence of the courts, an outlaw. These things show on which side Nature is in this war of courage and cowardice—which of the two is the instinct, and which the disease and the deformity.

Courage is the idol of the young; understanding by it what they understand—the power to bear, and the will to dare. It is this admiration which underlies the hero-worship of the river, the course, the ring, the field. It is not the skill, it is the courage, which makes the young colour glow, and the young pulse beat, as it watches the contest or pores over the chronicle. Nor will either young men or old, so long as England is free and Europe a Christendom, fail to pay their tribute, at least of silent praise, to a nobler and loftier daring. They will still honour the sincerity which will and must speak the truth, and the conscience which would go to the stake for duty. Though they blame, though they ridicule—though they call the man

perverse, impracticable, self-conceited—yet in the heart's heart there will also be a deeper and truer instinct, the while, of respect and reverence. To that confessor, to that martyr, they will give a more enduring (if less instant) homage than to the useful partisan or the complaisant time-server: it may be that in some life's anguish they will call him in for counsel, or in the last battle of all bid him stand beside their bed with his prayers and his consolations.

Yet Courage too, like Reverence, like Freedom, has its abuses—and thus the natural Instinct is seen to want the Divine Satisfaction.

We have seen how courage, in bodily things, may become reckless, purposeless, silly daring. Trace the same abuse in matters of the mind and of the soul.

Is there not, sometimes, an intellectual foolhardiness—seen in the upsetting of established convictions—seen in the inversion of historical reputations—seen in the reinstating of some exploded error, or the deification of some questionable virtue? With how many is courage the whitewash of paradox; the mere pleasure of startling, a compensation for all the mischief of

misleading! How many of our present troubles in Church and State have arisen out of the abuse of courage! A doubtful good, a half-truth, dimly discerned, or exaggerated by distance, has been seized as *the* good, *the* truth, the rest of human disquiet, the panacea of human ill—and a dashing swoop has been made upon it, in which the balance is lost, and the proportion of things forgotten. Many heresies, many scepticisms, have sprung out of this intellectual bravery. It has seemed so manly to contradict traditions—so spirited to trample upon conventions—so independent to speak the doubt, to launch the denial: the resolution, so honourable in sound, *At least I will be bold*, has started many a shallow scoffer on his impertinent way, and secured for him that attentive audience which was due neither to his intellect, nor to his knowledge, nor yet to his heart. The possession of courage is a trust as well as a gift. It is not because I am fearless that I am right. I must *prove all things* before I speak out for the one thing. I must no more be rash in uttering, than hypocritical in hiding. There is a mental audacity, at least as perilous, and

tenfold as culpable, as that which flings away a life in Alpine climbing, or attempts an impossible leap in circus or hunting-field.

Need I show that the same false courage has a yet more fatal place in things spiritual? What is it which keeps the Bible shut, the knee unbent, the conscience unexplored, the life unwatched? What is it which sends forth the young traveller destitute alike of armour and weapon, of map and guide, on that long, that perilous journey, of which the end is eternity? What is it which induces one who has been vanquished fifty times on a particular battle-field of temptation and predisposition, to try his chance there again, where he neither can nor will take with him that only strength in which he could hope to conquer? All these things, happening daily in ten thousand lives, are so many workings, in the most important of all departments, of that particular twist and bias of the Instinct of Courage, to which the devil looked as his last chance in his conflict with his Victor, when he said, *If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down from this pinnacle—for hath not God promised, with Thy will or without it, to*

keep Thee scatheless in all Thy ways? It was the Instinct of Courage to which he appealed—as he had found it, in its perversion, in the fallen—as he found it not in the Man of Men, in the Holy, in the Perfect One!

My brethren! if Jesus Christ had come only to exemplify an exceptional courage—only to call forth our admiration, as, in all points, physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, perfectly brave—it might indeed have accomplished this purpose, but I should not have chosen it for my topic to-night. Such a contemplation might have been an argument for the strong—for the heroic few—amongst my hearers: I do not think that it would have touched your hearts. I do not think it would have brought one of you, with his fears and his wants and his misgivings, to the throne of grace. And this is what we would do. This is that which if we do not we do nothing. Therefore I would approach my subject differently, and begin this latter part of it by avowing that, though there is an Instinct of Courage in us, there are many counteracting instincts too—insomuch that courage, in any high sense of the

word, must be, practically, either a rare gift, or else an acquired grace.

Few soldiers, probably, go into battle, eager for the fray. Of but one man here and there could the magnificent description of the war-horse have been written, *He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted...He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.* The very faith of our immortality forbids it. It must be a solemn thing, for a being with a soul and with a future, to take his life in his hand and wager it upon the issue. The instinct is not always the gift of courage; and the gift itself is corrected as well as elevated by the grace.

We reverence more, we ought to reverence more, the grace of courage than the gift. If we know a person to be naturally sensitive, susceptible of pain, delicately organized, and therefore quick to feel, we admire far more, in that person, what we know to be an acquired courage, than the stolid apathetic acquiescence of one who has neither brain to throb nor nerve to quiver. We cannot but gather from the Gospel narratives, that the courage of Christ Himself

was of this nobler, this less constitutional kind. We conceive of that frame as singularly sensitive. Such a heart, such a soul—may we dare to say it?—*must* have inhabited, must have made, if it found not, for its habitation, a body like unto it—a body sensitive to every touch, vividly, thrillingly responsive to each most distant access of suffering. Was He not, in this, as in all things, satisfying our instincts? undertaking not the easier but the more difficult task—the endurance, not of the strong, but of the weak—not of the man whose courage is gift, but of the man whose courage is grace? Thus would we account (in some measure) for that shrinking from the *hour* and the *cup*, which was so marvellously set, in Him, over against the submission and the self-sacrifice. Thus too would we see Him one, one in all things, not with the strong in their strength, but with the weak, rather, in their weakness. Thus too do we behold Him satisfying the instinct of courage, even of physical courage, by showing in Himself how they who have not may have—they who possess not the gift, may yet, under His Cross, drink in the grace.

Wonderful has been the issue. Who has read, unmoved, unconvinced, the histories of the Church's Book of Martyrs? Who has not wept tears of pity—are there not tears also of shame, of envy, of emulation at least?—as he sees old men bathing their hands with joy in the slowly consuming flame—weak women, in a more than Spartan (because devout) devotion, bracing sons for the sword—little children, not in ignorant but willing submission, going, for Christ's sake, almost from the laver of regeneration to the baptism of blood?

But these experiences have had their faint likenesses, or ugly caricatures, in other religions and under other enthusiams than the Christian. Excitements, of natural love, maddening hate, or meritorious bigotry, have had their martyrs in all times. We see indeed a difference—not uninstructive to trace out—between the Christian martyrdoms and any other. A difference in the motive, of course; a difference, too, in the spirit; and a wide difference in the hope. But there is a courage, unsustained by excitement, unsupported by sympathy, in the strength of which Christian men and Christian women

have endured in unmurmuring patience life-long pains, of want, of weakness, of secret wasting disease—wakening day by day to a dying life, and sleeping night by night an unresting sleep —on the strength, alone yet sufficient, of Christ believed, known, present—of Christ the Man of sorrows, of Christ the Life and the Resurrection. Even physical courage is in Him enough, enough, for His people.

You will have anticipated the transition from physical to moral courage.

There is nothing, I suppose, in the Divine Master's character, more—I will not say conspicuous, for it is never obtruded or exhibited —but certainly more pervasive—than this one feature—His moral courage. We have been twice before upon the confines of this subject—in speaking of His truth, and in speaking of His liberty. But the courage has a field of its own. And one chief point in it is the manner in which Christ dealt with the teachers and with the teaching of the age and of the country into which He came. Have you ever pondered the courage required in a Man unlearned and unlettered, to confront all the doctors and all the

writers and all the thinkers of the whole world? to stand up before men who had all that respect which the Church pays to her Bishops and the Nation pays to its Judges, and say, *You are all in error—and thus and thus are you wrong—I bring you a message from God, and I charge you, by your souls' everlasting rest, to hearken?* I know that this is a tone which no mere man has a right to adopt. And there are those who, in estimating (let us rather say, in studying) the character of our Lord, so confuse together the Divine and the Human, as to neutralize all that makes Him our living model—saying in themselves, He was God, and therefore it cost Him nothing to be a Perfect Man. Not so, my brethren, have we learned Him! We lose everything when we thus speak. Look, with me, to-night, at this moral courage of Jesus. Not only in the aspect of the dangers which it involved—of the penalties which it might bring—of the life which it sacrificed. This, standing alone, might be physical courage still. Far more instructive is it to see how He dared to speak out the truth of God, even though it might expose Him to the

charge of heresy or of blasphemy; to sweep away the whole fabric of lying self-righteousness—built upon a Law given not to inflate but to humble—even though all men might exclaim, *Perilous to morality;* to denounce authoritatively the hypocrisy and the falsehood and the selfishness and the cruelty of all existing instructors, even though the immediate result might be such a shaking of confidence, and such an upsetting of opinion, as would leave the vessel of thought without rudder or compass, and risk the exposure of precious souls to every gust and storm of infidel or semi-infidel speculation. Christ saw that in a soil of falsehood no virtue can grow: the plough and the harrow and the mattock must pass over it, ere the rain of grace can fertilize, or the sunshine of the Spirit warm it into productiveness.

And thus, in one great point, He taught us courage. He bade us never fear truth. No, not even when it is new; not even when it contradicts opinion; not even when it offends, frightens, or alienates. Truth, and the Truth, are always friends. Men sometimes would fan discord. Men say, Beware of Science—it will

undermine Revelation. Who dares to say that? Would God have men shut their eyes in one of His own worlds—the world of Nature—I suppose it is His world—in order that they may see more clearly in another of His worlds, which is the world of spirit and grace? Be wiser, my brethren, than that! Trust God with both His worlds. If you cannot profitably study both, at least cavil not at those who can. When you have ceased to be narrow, then, with some chance of being heard, you may bid the philosopher (he often needs it) to be reverent—to be humble!

We can but touch the subject. Even the touch is not superfluous. But few of us are called to meddle in these large magnificent concerns. Our business is less vast and more practical. The moral courage which Christ showed in His teaching, He showed also in His conduct. And it is here that we want most of all the cultivation of the Instinct of Courage. Think of the solemn warnings uttered by Christ concerning moral cowardice. How He bade us not be ashamed of Him and of His words. How He taught us not to fear those who (at worst)

can but kill the body—and *after that*—solemn words!—then there is something *after that*—have no more that they can do. How He told us that there is a hypocrisy of silence as well as a hypocrisy of talking. Hypocrisy is a two-faced two-headed monster. One half of it is simulation, feigning the good which is not; the other half of it is dissimulation, disguising the good which is. You may be a hypocrite, for lack of moral courage, as easily by sitting silent when others revile, as by opening your lips where others praise. Young men in this congregation! have the courage—pray for the courage—never to be ashamed of Christ, and you may do as much as the martyrs—you may light such a candle in England as by God's grace shall never be put out!

Lastly, I must add a word upon spiritual courage. The two run into each other—the moral and the spiritual—but we can distinguish.

Spiritual courage itself has two parts. Christ would satisfy the instinct of both.

There is a courage of enterprise, and there is a courage of resistance.

My brethren, Christ's soldiers—are we not all such? where is the baptismal cross gone? it once was on our foreheads, *in token*—Christ's soldiers must not always act only on the defensive. I know they must not be rash. I know that the Christian armoury has six arms of defence for one of attack. It is true. But is Christ never to win a new province? Is the Gospel to be always hedging and fencing, always concentrating and contracting? Shall there not be one new town, one new island, one new continent, added, in a lifetime, to the vital Christendom? Is there to be no spirit, no rush, no glow, in our service, our military, sworn, plighted service? Will you not bring over, not one of you, one single new soul to Christ? O if each one of you gained but one, hundreds would spring up, like Roderick's armed warriors from the bare Scottish hill-side, out of this one Service! Think of it—and if ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them!

I talk not with you to-night—perhaps you blame me for it—of magnificent enterprise. I have not asked one of you to go on a mission. I have not proposed the institution of one new

charity. I have not bidden one of you to change his work or to undo the thing that is. Now and then God calls a dear new recruit into His sworn army; calls Him with His special call, and binds his spurs upon him. But the general rule is, *Let every man abide in his calling*—only abide there *with God.* When in the old days one disciple was called, he straightway went and shared the new treasure with his friend, with his brother! Thus the Gospel grew: heart touched heart, eye looked into eye; and rescued souls, transformed lives, were the consequence. *Faith works by love.*

But yet a word. Enterprise I put first—because I would make my last word the courage of resistance. It is not all, to resist: we should be doing too. But O not this without that! We are idle, we are timid, in our aggression—brethren, dear brethren, we are cowards, we are dastards, in defence! Blame not the vehemence—it springs from conscience. We are all apt to forget the force of that Scriptural comparative. *The strong man armed, keeping his palace*—formidable, awful words!—that is the devil—and the palace is man's soul. But *the*

stronger than he comes — and that is Christ. Few believe it. Most men think the devil the stronger—I do not wonder! He is so, for most of us! O that evil temper, O that bad thought, O that indolent sleeping, O that vile habit—I thought I had conquered it. No! Again—again—again—yet again—when shall I know peace? When shall I be what St Paul calls *more than conqueror?*

When? When you let Christ teach you courage. When you believe Him to be the devil's Master—Conqueror once in fair fight—Conqueror not for Himself alone. When you call Him in to fight for you, and can say, in His name, not your own—

Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise.

Courage, Christian soldier! Courage, for enduring—courage, for daring—courage, for resistance—courage, for enterprise—courage, for life—courage, for death! *Christ is all—and in all.*

Quit thee like a man!

VI.

CHRIST SATISFYING THE INSTINCT OF SYMPATHY.

JOHN XI. 35.

Jesus wept.

THERE is a word in our language—the iron Roman had to arrange many circuitous approaches to it—we borrow it straight from the lively plastic responsive Greek—it is the word Sympathy.

No word in the language touches a more tender chord: none suggests more sublime thoughts of unselfishness, of charity: none, I think, can furnish a better example of that truth which it is the object of these Lectures to illustrate—how our Lord Jesus Christ, taking our nature upon Him, satisfies in His one Person all the real instincts of humanity, and so proves Himself the *Desire of all nations*, the rest of human disquiets, and the satisfaction of human thirsts.

Christ satisfying the Instinct of Sympathy will be our thesis to-night.

In many cases the term which was the key-

note of the Discourse was so simple that it asked not a definition. Truth—courage—freedom—are notions not to be misapprehended. Sympathy, partly perhaps from its foreign derivation, is scarcely so self-evident. In fact, if you examine its uses, you will find a slight divergence even in its sense.

It is a mistake, though a natural one, to think ourselves perfectly accurate when we have used the Greek Lexicon and translated *sympathy* into *fellow-suffering*. The word has gone through one process since it left the root *to suffer*. It would be more correct to say that that root itself does not mean suffering in our common sense, of pain or distress, but suffering in the more metaphysical sense of *being affected*. *Community of affection* is the literal sense of sympathy: but even this, to an English hearer, needs a word of explanation.

Sympathy has its place in the region of feeling. Any passion, any emotion, any of those impulses and ebullitions of the soul which consist in love or hate, anger or fear, admiration or indignation, may be a subject of that fellow-affection, which is sympathy.

Now this sympathy, which is community of affection, may be a community of congruity, or a community of contagion. We say there is a sympathy between two persons, when we would say that there is a likeness of disposition—that they are so constituted, in feeling and character, as to be mutually attracted—drawn to each other. That is a fellowship of congruity. We say, with equal correctness, that you sympathize with a person, when in some particular sorrow or joy you share the feeling arising out of circumstances not your own. This I call a fellowship of contagion. And although the terms used may sound somewhat precise or pedantic, you will find, as we proceed, that the distinction thus hinted is not fanciful or superfluous. In the one case, sympathy is likeness, harmony, kinship—might I say, in the strong forcible Latin, *concentus* and *consensus*—of nature. In the other case, it is more that which physicians speak of, when they say that one organ or member of the body suffers from sympathy with another. It is not the part primarily affected. It might even draw off the attention, by the perfectness of its fellow-feeling, from the

part which is in truth the diseased. A lively picture, itself, of that sympathy which Christ educates in His Gospel, and satisfies in Himself.

Now of this Sympathy — in either form —I shall carry all with me when I go on to speak of the power and prevalence in human things.

In the one form—the community of disposition, the fellowship of likeness—Sympathy is the spring of all friendship, of all love. We see, or think we see, in the soul which looks through those eyes, its windows, the very counterpart and complement of our own. We picture to ourselves, behind that screen and fence of the body, a tenderness or a strength, a counsel or a comfort, a quickness of feeling or a force of loving, on which we may lean, in which we may expatiate, and be happy, be at rest. Even beauty acts through sympathy. It is not the flesh and blood, it is not the grace or the colour or the feature, which wins the homage of the proud and bows the heart of the strong. It is the idea, it is the promise—to be fulfilled or disappointed—of qualities, of affections, of feelings, beautiful, incorporeal, indestructible. Therefore

we love. Another may be more perfect in proportion, more correct in feature, more comely in form: we are not attracted, because the sympathy of congruity is not there—because we read not there the disposition which is ours, or the disposition which ours craves for its support and its companion. We admit the excellence of many whom we love not: we blame ourselves for not loving—but why do we not love? for lack of that indefinable something, that sympathy of congruity, to which the English word *liking* seems to approximate: in health, there are sweet characters which move us not—in sickness there are loving ministries which even disturb and irritate. The sympathy of liking is absent.

It must be the same sympathy, not of fellow-suffering but of fellow-feeling, which works in all those magnificent triumphs of eloquence, by which, in revolutionary days or on topics of excitement, multitudes have been swayed as one man whithersoever the orator listeth. It is a phenomenon which loses nothing by examination. What is there in that common, perhaps insignificant figure—what is there in that coun-

tenance, neither comely nor commanding — what is there in that voice, neither stentorian nor musical—what is there in the office or the rank or the history of the man—to account for results so disproportionate to the machinery? Through the long hours of a day, easily within our memory, the fate of a Capital—perhaps of an Empire—hung in suspense while one man talked to ten thousand: upon the success of that utterance it depended whether the gutters of Paris should once again run with blood: the sun set upon a calm—and that voice did it. By what strength? by what magic? By the power, by the charm, of sympathy: by the exercise, in exceptional vividness, of those instinctive affections which make a whole world kin: by that communion of impulses and passions which gives a voice entrance into souls, and makes a multitude the servile creature unawares, for the day, of an influence backed neither by intimidation nor by law nor by duty. It is the sympathy of congruity.

To the same instinct appeals poetry and fiction—the stage, and the novel. What is it which makes it possible to draw tears of resist-

less emotion, from eyes which know that they are witnessing imaginary sorrows? It is the skill, more potent the more natural, by which genius draws upon the resources of ordinary average human feeling—in other words, throws itself upon that sympathy which is community of nature. The moment the tragical passes into the improbable—which is to say, so soon as the sense of likeness is lost—the interest fades, the tear dries itself. Why? Because sympathy is fellow-feeling: the feeling which is not mine awakens in me nothing but the cold distant stare of a more or less feeble wonder.

As the instinct of sympathy explains all magnificent successes—accounts for a revolution, accounts for an emancipation, accounts for a crusade—so that defect, mental, moral, or both, which we call a want of sympathy, is reason enough for many a conspicuous failure which has befallen men possessed of every gift, of every talent, but one. You see it in oratory. There may be learning, there may be industry, there may be imagination, there may be thought, there may be language—and yet the audience is unimpressed, the goal is never reached, the

work is undone. Why? Because the tone was cold—there was no heart—human passion was not working, and therefore human passion was not wrought upon. You see it in action. There was a life prodigal of promise; an education exceptionally advantageous; a character absolutely blameless; a career crowded with opportunity; from time to time, a point gained, an onward step taken—yet, on the whole, in the retrospect, that life was a failure: no mark was left upon the age: no deed, no achievement, was accomplished, by which history, even contemporary history, can remember it. All is accounted for, if it was true of that person, that, however excellent, however brilliant, he was wanting in sympathy: coldness of temperament chilled the touch of friendship, or the fire which sparkled was impotent to kindle.

This sympathy has its excess as well as its deficiency. It is so charming to please; so flattering to be thought a man of feeling; so easy, so remunerative, to indicate, by smile, or emphasis, or warmth of greeting, a world of sympathetic affection within; so delicious, too, in a life not too loving, to draw forth from

another the expression of a responsive kindliness —that some men are guilty of practising thus upon the good impulses of nature, and incur, in the end, an almost exaggerated charge of insincerity and hypocrisy. There is a quickness of sympathy which the world itself punishes, and for which Christ alone has provided an outlet wholly for good.

It is by an abuse of sympathy that the cruellest of all wrongs is inflicted upon the lives and souls of others. What is sin itself, in its most alluring, its deadliest form, but one of those most specious yet foulest of inhumanities which the old Law of God designated as a *seething of the kid in his mother's milk*—a riddle read for us by the genius of our great English novelist, in the form—destroying another by means of the soul's best and tenderest affections?

We are passing thus, half imperceptibly, from the one sympathy to the other—from the sympathy of congruity to the sympathy of contagion.

This, too, is an Instinct.

Who ever heard of a man destitute of pity?

God has made it natural to us to go forth in spontaneous compassion towards a woe brought to our door. To feel is human: we call a man unnatural, inhuman, who cannot pity. Cruelty, in the sense of refusing to feel, is a deformity as well as a vice.

But some men feel without acting. And the consequence is a deadening of the feeling.

And other men keep away from them, industriously, that which will make them feel. Will not see the distress, will blind themselves to the sorrow, which, seen, would demand, would enforce, compassion. And thus the instinct is wasted. God's precious talent of compassion is laid up in the napkin of selfishness, and when He comes to reckon, there is only the half-desperate half-irreverent answer, *Lo, there Thou hast that is Thine.*

To this second kind of sympathy belong all those efforts and activities by which we throw ourselves into another's life for purposes of beneficent influence. What is it which alone renders possible an Education worthy of the name? Is it that the teacher shares personally the difficulties, the perplexities, the ignorances, of the

taught? Is it that the master, himself a grown-up or elder man, feels, for himself, a lively interest in these games or these races which fill so much of the young pupil's thoughts in his waking and his dreaming? Is it that the educator is still liable, himself, to these particular forms of temptation with which he grapples so earnestly, for his young charge, in private and public expostulation? Nay, in all these things he is exercising that sympathy which makes another's case his own; that higher, that nobler fellow-feeling which is not exactly pity or compassion, still less a conscious condescension, but rather the very grace which Christ manifested in all things when He first *took upon Him our nature,* and then in it *bare our infirmities and carried our sicknesses.*

My brethren, we can keep Christ no longer in the background of our subject, but must bid you fasten your eyes upon Him with single concentrated devotion, while we gather into a few most inadequate words the thought presented in the beginning—Christ satisfying, as all other instincts, so this instinct, not least, of our humanity—the Instinct of Sympathy.

1. And here then, first, He presented Himself to us, in our thirst and in our hunger, as possessing all that beauty, that ideal yet most real loveliness, which has a natural affinity to everything that there is in us of deep and noble, of pure and true. He appeals to the Instinct of Sympathy, in its form of likeness or congruity.

I know that we must speak with caution here. We must not confuse the ruined with the original temple, nor the dismasted unrigged wreck with the brave ship which God launched on the sunny morning of Creation's sixth and last day. Still you know that it would be false if I addressed any one here present as having no response in him whatever to that which is honest and lovely and of good report. You know that, even when you serve and worship the creature, you first deck it with the Creator's beauty. You do not bow yourself down before an idol which you represent to yourself as obscene or false or cruel. The error is not in saying that evil is good or good evil, but in forgetting that there can be but *One really good, that is, God.* Your very idolatry bears witness to your thirst for God. If once you could see Christ as

He is, you would feel your highest instinct of sympathy satisfied: for you would see there, in essence and in perfection, all those qualities which you are struggling to find, in poor disappointing semblance, in some being whom Christ made, and who owes to Christ whatever fragment it may have of beauty.

Well do these hearts know within themselves that this part of the Instinct of Sympathy finds not its rest nor its satisfaction below. I address to-night from this Pulpit a few, a handful of persons, who have the very desire of their souls satisfied. God has given them, here below, the very thing that they asked of Him—or asked not, but took for themselves, and then went their journey. I know well enough, in these few cases, what this supposed rest is. In some shape it is sympathy; earnest, devoted, reciprocated affection. O they are happy—grudge them not! Happy, might it but last! Happy, were there no waves and storms, no cross-currents and shipwrecks, before them—no changing circumstance, no precarious health, no ebbing time, no eventual death! As it is, what shall we say even of these?

For the rest, life is not repose. Care, toil, ill health, bereavement, have forbidden it. But these, in comparison with one other thing, are light troubles. They have not yet found the haven of sympathy. They are still lonely; lonely in a full house; lonely amongst abounding luxuries; lonely in their working, lonely in their resting. There is a sad spot behind them, where they parted with the hope of sympathy: they look this way and that for it: they are not satisfied.

I know too well, my brethren, that the first movement and gesture of such persons, on hearing of the comfort of Religion, of Christ satisfying the want of the soul, is one of impatience, perhaps of disgust. Give me something substantial, they cry: mock me not with these fancies. Would to God that one of these would stand still and listen to me for a moment this evening! I would try to say to him, You want sympathy —that sympathy which is in its highest form, community of affection. On earth you have not found it. But if you had found it, surely you have seen this friend and that friend, who for a few months seemed perfectly happy, again

stripped bare—the desire of his eyes gone—all to be sought again, vainly sought—life a wilderness. You cannot call that satisfaction, which may be lost in one moment! What if there be opened to you, at this moment, a perfect love? the love of One who is all love? the love of Him who made life, and who has abolished death?

Christ not only appeals to sympathy; not only guides, directs, demands sympathy: there is this also—He makes a religion of it—yea, He makes it religion. For what is His religion? Is it not this, Have sympathy with God? that sort of sympathy which is first and above all (say it with reverence) *liking*—the drawing of soul to soul and of spirit to spirit as by the magnet of a felt loveliness? *I drew them with cords of a man*, saith God, *with bands of love.*

Without this Divine sympathy, this sense of the loveliness of God as revealed in Christ, religion, my brethren, will be a burden, will be a weariness, will be a bondage, to the end. Christ bids us have reality of sympathy with God Himself; that sort of sympathy which is, first, liking—delight in His presence—enjoyment

of His companionship—interest in His interests —fellow-feeling, fellow-aim, fellow-work, fellow-love.

2. But, my brethren, Christ satisfies the instinct of sympathy in this other sense also—that He comes forth into our life, just such as it is, and makes the sympathy of likeness a sympathy also of contact.

I must assume everything—I must detail nothing. I must throw you back upon your Gospels to see how our Lord Jesus Christ, when He was upon earth, Himself touched each side and each corner of fallen humanity. We might have thought the Creator would shrink from the ugly thing into which sin has corrupted His handywork—from disease, from deformity, from death. He did not. He never heard the leper's plaintive outcry, *Unclean, Unclean,* by which he bore witness against himself that he was a defilement, but He made it a reason, not for fleeing but for drawing nigh, with the counter-utterance, *Show thyself to the priest*—which meant, *Thou art clean*—or the more cheering mandate still, *I will—be clean!* Again and again, He entered the mourner's chamber, or joined the funeral

train, or visited the sealed tomb, to say to the dead, *Arise—awake—come forth!*

But this was no formal, no official utterance —as though to say, This proves, this attests me the Christ. The brief word of the text, *Jesus wept,* is so tender as to have formed (what will not?) a theme for scoffing. Why weep if He was about to reanimate? O blind, ignorant, wilful infidelity! Would you weigh and measure Christ's tears by the standard of a utilitarian carping? Shall He not weep beside a grave about to be opened, when He thinks of ten thousand thousand graves sealed till the Advent? *and then—?*

I know of no real want or peril of humanity with which Christ upon earth did not express sympathy. I was going to have excepted such dangers as grow out of luxury: but I remember how He *loved* the rich young man, and I strike out that from my exceptions. I was going to have excepted obstinate unbelief, inveterate formalism, rank hypocrisy: but I remember how He wept over Jerusalem—which had killed the prophets and afterwards built their sepulchres —and I must strike out that. I was going to

have excepted the ugly hideous form of sin itself—the access of the tempter—how could the All-holy have felt that? But I remember, *He was in all points tempted like as we are*—and therefore He is *able to sympathize* (it is the very word) *with our infirmities.* In short, if you think of it, what He really sympathized with was poor sin-spoilt sin-ruined humanity: it was man fallen, apostate, ruined, obdurate—it was *that* for which He died: and the Apostle of love, so severe upon the Cosmos, is the one to give utterance to those accents of mysterious unfathomable love—*And not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

Dear Brethren! that which He did He bids us do. He bids us follow Him in His sympathy. He bids us have sympathy with man; not in the way of condescension; not as Angels stooping to condole; not as the pure mourning over the impure—but as men touching to heal; as men not loving the sin yet loving the sinner; not as breathing by choice infected air, but as infected men nursing, cherishing, giving ourselves for the infected. Such, in its fulness, is what we have dared to call the sympathy of the contagion.

There is this, I think, above all, in Christ satisfying the Instinct of Sympathy, that, as He makes religion in its source a sympathy with God, so He makes religion in its stream a sympathy with man.

All our chiefest acts of religion He makes an exercise of sympathy—human as well as Divine. To Public Worship He gives a special promise of His presence. To Communion He appends the mysterious thought—*This is my body—This is my blood.* His disciples on earth He knits into a Church. The life of Heaven itself He represents as a Home of *many mansions*—as a *being made perfect in one.*

Lonely people in this Congregation! cease to be alone! Make much of Christ—make much of your brethren. It is your own fault if one of you is lonely. Think of, pray for, minister to, another—he must be a brother, she must be a sister—and your desolation is comforted. *Rejoice with them that rejoice: weep with them that weep.* Lonely lives are lonely for want of sympathy: sympathy will cure them. Feel sympathy, think sympathy, cherish sympathy, live sympathy—and you are not alone. God,

the God of love, is your God: the children of His love meet you, surround you, dwell with you, always.

Father, I will that they also...be with Me... That they all may be one—I in them, and Thou in Me, that they also may be One in Us!

Loneliness is swallowed up in Love.

VII.

CHRIST SATISFYING THE INSTINCT OF SACRIFICE.

1 JOHN III. 16.

He laid down His Life for us.

CHRIST, *the Desire of Nations*, has yet one want, one craving, one instinct, of our nature to satisfy, when He has fulfilled all of which we have spoken. We will name it, for to-night, the Instinct of Sacrifice.

I know that the combination has a startling sound. Men who take a dark view of fallen humanity would read, perhaps, for sacrifice, selfishness. They would remind us that the commonest phrase of the kind—the phrase which might almost seem to have suggested the idea of these Sermons—is, the instinct of self-preservation. There is a whole train of like expressions—instincts of self-love, self-defence, self-interest, self-praise, self-exculpation, self-advancement—all having their origin, all finding their generalization, in one comprehensive principle, the Instinct of Selfishness.

My brethren, we have denied the name of an Instinct, throughout these Sermons, to anything radically evil. We have sought to dig deeper than the stratum of the Fall, even to the solid primeval rock of the Divine Creation. We have called nothing an Instinct, which the Creator Himself could not have implanted. Truth, Courage, Freedom, Progress, Reverence, Sympathy—these may have their tendencies in directions not good, their right-hand excesses and their left-hand defects; but we all feel that they are in themselves noble and lofty: to place Selfishness amongst them would be to ruin the symmetry, the harmony, the consistency of the whole. Selfishness belongs to the antagonist class: falsehood, cowardice, slavery, profaneness, cruelty, these are its kinsfolk: it is in the region of brave, hardy, difficult self-abnegation that we must look for a companion virtue to complete and crown the list. That companion virtue we call the Instinct of Sacrifice.

We use Sacrifice now in a comprehensive sense. We do not restrict it to that act of religion, that offering, whether of animal life or

material substance, from which it takes its name. We give it that larger, more derived, more popular meaning, which includes the giving up of anything, whether to God or man; the surrender of anything, precious and valuable, for the service of some one out of ourselves, whether he be God above or man below.

The word Sacrifice rises to the surface, this week[1], of all thought and all worship. Is there any sense—it must be our first question—in which Sacrifice is an instinct? Or was it a want created, or at least disclosed, by the Gospel? Was it an idea originated, as well as satisfied, by Christ Himself?

We are quite ready to admit that not Sacrifice, but its opposite, is the spontaneous thing in the fallen. When St Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, speaks of sin as subsisting, though in a dormant, torpid, lifeless state, in the man not yet under law; of sin, not as springing into existence, but only as springing into activity, when *the commandment comes*, with its imperative rule and its threatened penalty—he teaches

[1] The week next before Easter.

the profound truth, that below the act, below the purpose, below the desire, of transgression, there lies, in all the fallen, a root of evil, which is, the self-will planted, where the will of God ought to be, in the soil and ground of the heart. This is sin. It is the independence of the will of the man, even before it is the rebellion and the corruption of the life. Selfishness is not *a* sin: it is sin itself. The self-will, moving and ruling itself, not moved and ruled, in its source and spring, by the supreme will of God —this, this is our Fall. Selfishness is the vice of the fallen: it prompts and it acts in everything.

The first cry, the first movement, of the child, is the expression of the self-will. The whole spirit of the young boy—except in those rarest cases, almost as precarious as they are beautiful, in which Christ has been the preoccupant—is a spirit of self-will. It is the office of the Schoolmaster to *deliver him to laws.* Gradually, by the help of many struggles and battlings without and within, selfishness is found to be suffering. The self-will must make room for other wills around it, or it will be coerced and buffeted into subjection. To a certain ex-

tent, in certain directions, mere selfishness is commonly, long before manhood, bounded and circumscribed. The self-interest of the many sets limits to the self-indulgence of the one.

But what limits? How easily overstepped by the daring—how tolerant of all but a few selfishnesses within them! Not sin because sinful, but crime because inconvenient, is the object of the world's prohibition. Selfishness, by selfishness, is not cast out but driven in. Youth, manhood, age, are selfish still. *Am I my brother's keeper?* is the ready answer to the remonstrance which reminds of responsibility. *What is that to us? see thou to that*—is the sinner's heartless rejoinder to the victim of his passion or the tool of his crime.

And by reason of all these things the world itself is made the wilderness it is.

Selfishness is the rule in human life, unselfishness the exception. All sins are selfishnesses: all sins, and some (so called) virtues. Even into religion self enters: and a spirit of self-contemplation, self-isolation, self-seeking, self-regarding, spoils, in many, the beautiful, the blessed thing which ought to be the service of

God Himself in the service of His created and His children.

We shall see, as we advance, that even into sacrifice self may enter; confusing the very distinction of terms, and turning the highest of human graces into an ugliness and a snare.

The Instinct of Sacrifice. There is such a thing.

You see it, in the darkest places of the earth, as an instinct towards God.

No religion has been without its sacrifices. The most costly possessions—gold and silver, gems and precious stones—have been given to decorate temples, to enrich shrines. Priesthoods have been founded—perpetual ministries before God in behalf of the self-accusing; endowed with lands and tithes; sometimes lifted into princedoms and set side by side with thrones. It was the Instinct of Sacrifice. A sense of sin, however ignorantly conceived or rudely expressed, has wrought everywhere in the fallen, and made the idea of propitiation one of the elementary thoughts and principles and axioms of mankind.

Where the temperament has been gloomy,

and the heaven above exceptionally clouded, the Instinct of Sacrifice has become an impulse of self-torture. The expectation of acceptance has been proportioned to the cruelty of the discipline, and the value of every gift and offering estimated by the void and the wound left behind in the heart and life of the giver. *Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression?* has been a question seriously pondered, answered in the affirmative, in many a habitation of darkness—religion itself whetting the sword.

Even in such morose and terrible superstitions we see a perverted, distorted, disfigured truth. They witnessed to a fact, which civilization always obscures and philosophy too often ignores—the fact that sin is, and the fact that sin, wherever it is, is exceeding sinful. The Instinct of Sacrifice, in its most horrible promptings, is a testimony to man's fall and to God's holiness. Before God could satisfy the instinct in Christ, He employed long ages in deepening and educating it. There only could the sacrifice consummated on Calvary safely comfort or effectually bless, where there was first a profound sense of sin, and an earnest pondering of the

question of questions, *How shall man become just with God? or how shall he be made clean, who is born of a woman?*

There is an Instinct of Sacrifice, also, towards man.

What is love itself—natural love—but an instinct of sacrifice?

What will not a mother lavish upon her offspring? Ease, comfort, rest, food, health, life itself—all is given, without thought, without effort: we scarcely stop to wonder—we call it an instinct, and pass on!

It is perhaps the purest of such instincts. Because into almost every other example self does enter. Where the affection is one of choice, where passion has place, where an equal love, or a love of eager devotion, is the moving spring, it is easy to see that sacrifice has its reward. To stir for myself a feeling of gratitude in a soul dear to me as my own, is object enough, reward enough, for any effort, for any self-denial. Still I call this too an instinct of sacrifice, and by the help of it the opposite instinct, of a predominant selfishness, is every day checked and mitigated in the fallen.

Still more remarkable is the Instinct of Sacrifice in those rarer examples of heroic patriotism which lighted up the page of heathen history with a gleam cast before from Christ's Gospel. That an abstraction, like honour or country, should inspire Curtius for his leap or Regulus for his return, before Christ had taught self-devotion or brought to light immortality, would be inexplicable on any supposition but one—that humanity in its ruin preserves still traces, and fragments too, of the *image* and the *likeness;* —has still the superscription of the Divine, though the coin is defaced and blackened by the rude contact and debasing commerce of flesh and earth and devil.

The Instinct of Sacrifice runs through everything. Wherever an object is clearly seen and earnestly coveted, there is the spirit of sacrifice ready to make for it. What will not a man *give in exchange for* his idol? Wealth—office—rank—fame—power—name the price, he will pay it. Tell him that this position or that can only be won by endless toil; tell him that he must live laborious days and watch through unsleeping nights; that he must forego amuse-

ments of which he is fond, habits to which he is addicted, tastes which are to him as a nature, vices which have been to him as a chain—if he believes it, if he cares for the object, he will make the sacrifice. It is the principle of enterprise, alike for good and evil. Vice, too, demands sacrifices. The same earnestness, the same self-surrender, shown in a good cause, would have made a hero or a martyr. The Instinct of Sacrifice has taken the wrong turn—but it was there. Sometimes, though the end is good, the sacrifice is excessive. Health, life itself, has been squandered upon the winning. There was nothing left to arrive. The sacrifice was its own defeat. Sometimes there arises a silly passion for sacrifice. Nothing is thought worthy, nothing is thought right, unless it is disagreeable, irksome, painful. Life is made miserable, our own and others', by a wanton prodigality of sacrifice. We begin to hate the name. Why must virtue be made so repulsive? Why must our deity be Moloch? We account for it by the instinct. So strong is the instinct, so general its recognition as one of the higher principles of nature, that even self-interest sometimes takes the name—

and a tradesman who hopes to make a sudden advantage will advertise himself as selling at a prodigious sacrifice. These things are the parodies which wait upon virtues as the shadow upon the substance.

One thing you will always find in its human workings—that sacrifices are only made for things or persons supposed to be good. This is St Paul's argument in the Epistle to the Romans. It is a rare thing, he says, scarcely to be found, that a man will die for the righteous. Perhaps for the good man, he adds, partially correcting himself—for the man, that is, not of stern unlovely virtue, but of beautiful winning beneficence—perhaps for the good man, some one might be discovered, patient even to die. There, at all events, the instinct of sacrifice bounds itself. If you can point to an instance of self-devotion to death, be sure it was one in which loveliness was the attraction as well as love the motive. With Christ only, with God only—he proceeds to argue—it was not so. *While we were yet sinners, He died:* by this prodigy of self-sacrifice, God commended His love!

Thus pass we, my brethren, from nature to

grace, from the instinct in man to the satisfaction in Christ.

A glorious subject—might we but compass it! This cannot be: but may a ray or two of its unapproachable glory shine upon and cheer the effort!

There is an Instinct in us of Sacrifice. Something within says to us, Thou art fallen. Thou hast sinned. Thy sin separates between thee and thy God. Something—something—something—O what is it?—must reconcile, must reunite, the broken-off thing, to the Perfect, to the Blessed, to the Restful and Resting One. Canst thou do anything? Look round thy treasures, and see what thou hast to offer. Gold, frankincense, myrrh—toil, loss, pain—thy loved ones, thy best-beloved — thyself, body, soul, spirit—count them over—weigh, measure, appraise each—will it meet the case? Will it pay the mighty debt? How? How? Is it not God's already? Is it not already sin-stained, sin-spoilt? Thy past, is it not guilty? Thy present, is it not the product of sin past? Thy future, is it not enfeebled, compromised, pawned and pledged to evil?

And yet — something — something — there must be—or the great gulf may be for ever fixed between thee and thy God!

O mystery of mysteries! This Instinct of Sacrifice—this feeling of an unknown something which must re-unite, reconciliate, re-harmonize —was it not put there for a purpose? Shall it only be crushed in thee, and beaten back, by poor meagre peradventures of an obvious pardon, of a forgiveness bought by repentance, a sort of Bridge of Sighs between thy God and thee?

Why should we refuse, in the face of this conscious want and outcry for a Sacrifice, the plain, simple, restful revelation—

He laid down his life for us—He satisfied the Instinct of Sacrifice, first, by giving Himself for us?

Will you deny that there is something in you which this, this alone, comforts? And what is comfort? some poor, feeble, mild palliative? What does comfort mean—mean by derivation —is it not strengthening, fortifying, embraving? I say that there is this in Christ's sacrifice—so soon as it is seen to have taken away sin.

Argue not—there is no logic in heaven—it is a voice sent to thee from the excellent glory —*Son, thy sins are forgiven thee*—forgiven, for the sake of Christ?

We say then, first, that the sacrifice of Christ was satisfactory, because it was necessary. It was not, like one of those provoking self-sacrifices of which we spoke a moment ago, wanton, wilful, superfluous; a sacrifice which just made that dark which might have been bright, repulsive which might have been attractive. There was something between us and God—Christ's sacrifice took it away. O we could not ask you to meet together in this holy house day by day through this week surnamed after the Passion —we could not summon you on Friday next to hear and to see how Christ lifted from the earth draws all men unto Him—if this sacrifice were a mere exhibition of patience—a mere Ammergau of theatrical representation! It is because it was necessary that it satisfies. We pray you to behold here the very thing after which all religions were groping and guessing when they made sacrifices their centre. We pray you to accept this as the kernel and mar-

row of the Gospel—*I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified—He is the propitiation for our sins!*

This satisfaction of the Instinct of Sacrifice has thus its aspect towards God. But I would show you also—else I leave my thesis but half touched—how it has an aspect equally towards man. We have seen how man, in poor, shadowy, half-selfish ways, offers self-sacrifices towards his fellows. Does our Lord Jesus Christ, over and above His great sacrifice, fulfil this instinct also?

See Him, then, satisfying the grand old type, not only of the sin-offering, but of the burnt-offering too.

The sin-offering stopped, as it were, with the death. The body of that victim was carried out, and burnt without the camp. None could intermeddle with, none might even partake of, that solemn, that unique offering. Christ was that—never to be interfered with, never to be imitated—when He bore the sin of the world. But there was also a burnt-offering. The idea of the sin-offering was propitiation. The idea of the burnt-offering was consecration. Finality was the one. Thoroughness was the other. The

sin-offering typified the one, perfect, all-sufficient atonement. The burnt-offering typified the pervasion of the whole being by the transforming fire of the Holy Ghost. The one was the sacrifice of the death. The other was the sacrifice of the life.

He gave himself for us.

There are parts of that self-gift which we cannot apprehend. The original humiliation—the leaving Heaven for us—the laying aside of Deity—the becoming Man—this we vainly struggle after: it is like those ideas of infinity, of omnipresence, of eternity, which we must leave as they are. *It is high—I cannot attain to it.*

But some things we can grapple with. That long, irksome, monotonous life—thirty years out of three and thirty—in Nazareth; that dull home; that humble shop; that wasted youth; —that unpreparing preparation for duty; that obscurity, that uselessness, that silence—we can see, all of us, that there was sacrifice, exemplary, instructive, monitory sacrifice, there!

And that foregoing of all life's pleasures; that voluntary abstinence—for might not the Creator have chosen otherwise?—from all that

makes earth sparkle and the natural heart thrill; that homeless wandering; that companionship of the ignorant; that one only friendship, with a heart that had to be educated into the understanding of the Heavenly, into the love of the Divine—was there not sacrifice even there—even in the one, the only solace of the great solitude?

He gave himself for us. In the end He gave up the first, midst, and last of man's possessions—freedom. He submitted to be bound. We have all read, in the most pathetic of histories, how a King, schooled in adversity, taught obedience by suffering, yet on the very scaffold instinctively resented that—struggled with his executioner. So did not the King of kings. He gave Himself for us—and so giving, endured the binding cord as well as the piercing nail—as well as the buffeting and the scourging—yea, *hid not His face from shame and spitting.*

The sacrifice was thorough. The fire went through and through—kindling and penetrating and transfiguring. *Burnt with fire, yet not consumed.*

And then, and thus, was the life taken from

the earth. In no calm process of natural decay; on no safe, honoured, however painful death-bed; but amidst crowds of triumphant foes, amidst the taunts and blasphemies of men who thought themselves to be doing God service—*He became obedient, unto death—the death of the Cross.*

My brethren, not even thus would Christ have entirely satisfied in us the instinct of Sacrifice. We should have seen in Him the specimen of all sacrifice. We might have rested upon His one Sacrifice the hopes and fears of the soul. But the Instinct of Sacrifice is in all of us—can we learn of Christ how it may be made effectual? No religion can satisfy which does not satisfy this; which does not answer the question, How, and what, can I sacrifice? There is that within each of us, which bears witness against a life of self. This indolence, this loitering, this uselessness, this desultoriness of living, it is my plague, it is my burden, it is my curse. Is there no way of ennobling, of elevating, of consecrating my life? *Will no one have me?* Must I for ever eat the swine's husks, grind in the taskmaster's mill, and bake Egypt's bricks?

Therefore, since Christ will do no part of His work by halves, He undertakes this office also. He appeals to this native instinct, the Instinct of Sacrifice, and says to us, You are God's sacrifice. Each one of you is separately thought of, cared for, wanted, purchased, by the Everliving, the All-loving God. He will have you. He bids you give yourself to Him. Come to the altar of the one Sacrifice. Let the will bring the man. Let the soul bring the body. Let the spirit bring the life. And there, standing beside God's Altar, where the Sin-offering has been once and for ever accepted, let the great High Priest, Jesus Christ, Himself at once Victim and Altar and Priest, offer you up as a living, a reasonable, an acceptable sacrifice, pervaded, in every part and in every thought, by the quickening fire of the Eternal Spirit.

Then shall your offering, like your Lord's, have its aspect also towards man. The same voice which says, *Yield, present, yourselves unto God,* says also, *Christ laid down his life for you—lay down yours for the brethren.* You know that you want a service—that your soul cries out for its self-sacrifice—find it here! Find

it in the living loving labour of a consecrated man in holy work. See in all that surround you Christ's created, God's redeemed. Ask not, How little, but, How much, can I do, day by day, for Him who so loved me? Then life itself shall wear a new garb for you—because God has taken you for His own, and the Instinct of Sacrifice has become the Grace of the Consecration.

Brethren, he whom the Cross of Jesus moves not will be moved by nothing. We part, this night, almost on the eve of the mighty Passover, after seven solemn meetings, to meet again, many of us, no more, in this place, for ever! Go not forth, from this last solemn Service, without one earnest, silent, secret prayer, poured from each heart, for a blessing upon the past and upon the future! Pray that the admiration of Christ, quickened in you by these meditations, may pass into the adoration! Pray that the adoration may become devotion—and that the offering of the soul, this night offered, may, day by day, till death comes, be perfected in the sacrifice of the life!

VIII.

CHRIST SATISFYING THE INSTINCT OF UNITY.

JOHN X. 16.

And there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd.

A RESTFUL music is in the words. All are conscious of the charm.

For are not all conscious of the want ministered to, and of the instinct to which Christ here appeals?

There is no word in the language more powerful, more alluring, than that little monosyllabic *one*—that first element of thought and reckoning—which, with its derivatives, holds a primary place as much in religion as in human life.

There is an Instinct of Unity even in fallen nature—speaking and doing great things, for good and for evil.

Over against it there stands, indeed, a mighty force and even appetite of discord. There are men amongst us with no heart for resemblances,

and no eye but for differences; persons infesting society with quarrels, and never so happy as when by whispering they can separate chief friends. The same appetite—instinct we will not call it—is busy too in public. Political antagonism, that rough yet ready instrument for stimulating, in an imperfect world, the warfare of a State's energy, is degraded, by such men, into a selfish scramble of party. Even the Church of Christ, so peaceful in its hope, so peaceable in its profession, sinks, through this vile incongruous admixture, into a thing of suspicions and wranglings; thinking that it does God service by making men offenders for a word, and by taking away the key of entrance from all who cannot utter the Shibboleth of some merely earth-sprung formula.

But as the appetite of discord is the disease and vice of the Fall, so is the Instinct of Union a feature of the creation in God's likeness.

And we say that in all but the utterly vile and refuse that instinct is still strong.

We see its working in all things. *Union is Power* is a maxim of life. What has not been done, in social life and political, by the help of

leagues and combinations? Who has not seen, again and again, some principle, of politics or morals, first enunciated by an original thinker willing for half a life-time to be called eccentric by the many—then taking shape and form as the conviction, the resolution, the determination of a small brotherhood of workers—at last forcing itself upon the acceptance of rulers, and becoming in its turn the axiom, the truism, of generations that shall be born? Genius dropped the seed into the ground—but sympathy made it to grow, and union reaped the harvest.

This Instinct of Union needed, like other instincts, Christ to satisfy it.

For, like other instincts, it is a hungry thing, and it is an ambiguous thing. It prowls for its food, and often would fill itself with husks and garbage; often seeks in sin itself its rest and its satisfaction, and accepts an ugly hollow mask of sensuous love in place of that true, that deep, that beautiful heart's union which God made it to desire and to insist upon. It was waiting for Christ *the Desire of Nations*, at once to fulfil and to transfigure it.

The text is one promise, one out of many,

made by Christ upon earth to this instinctive yearning for unity.

Standing upon the earth, in one of its smallest, narrowest, most exclusive nationalities, out of which personally He never travelled—to which (in His personal ministry) He strictly, almost jealously, confined Himself—He utters here one of those startling, almost paradoxical claims to a world-wide influence and action in the future, by which He made it plain, to us of later generations, that it was by no unforeseen accident, by no fortuitous coincidence, that Christianity became, in the event, the Religion of all Nations. *Other sheep I have*—mark the authority, the lordliness, the reposeful confidence too, of the words—*Other sheep I have, which are not of this* Jewish *fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold*—no, the original says not that—not, *one fold*, but *one flock, one Shepherd.*

Man yearns after unity. Looks with unrest and disquietude upon this earth of the dispersion. Sees how sin, in the very pretence of uniting, ever and everywhere scatters. Marks how the self-will, proposing to scale heaven by

combination, drew down upon itself the curse of Babel, which is, co-existence in confusion—combination without co-operation—forces mustered for the war against God, and the very word of command turned into an unintelligible muttering. That is the Parable of the Confusion of Tongues, as written in Genesis, as reversed and healed at Pentecost.

This is the world which Christ enters, and seeing the multitudes restlessly toiling, offers to collect and to unite them in Himself. *Them also I must bring; and there shall be one flock, one Shepherd.*

Often has the Church itself read His words erroneously. Thought He said, *One fold;* asked curiously, *Where, Lord?* must see the gathering—see it with the eye of sense—hear it with the outward ear, expressing itself in some one language of earth; and thus has mistaken altogether the true promise, and been unaware of the nature of its real fulfilment.

Something may be due to this mistranslation: *One fold,* for, *One flock.*

But indeed the error lies deeper than a word or a phrase.

What is union? What is unity?

How natural to answer, It is the possession of one polity, one worship—at least, one creed. Some minds have found a satisfaction in the idea of an Œcumenical Anglicanism; have shed sympathetic tears in the gathering of a hundred Anglican Bishops in little Lambeth, when great Rome could have easily assembled her thousand Bishops, as uniform in their utterances as the others were discordant. And yet, my brethren, neither here, nor there, was that unity of which Christ spoke. Church government does not make it. The triple organization, of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons—that magic sound which to many is so musical—may leave us, to the end, in all the confusions of Ritualisms and Rationalisms which are the plague of our hearts in this seventieth year of our troublesome nineteenth century. It may be a comfort to some minds to exchange brotherly embraces across Atlantics and Pacifics, with Bishops of very corrupt Churches, tolerated because they are Episcopal. To me it would be a far more blessed sight if English Non-Conformity might be kindly accosted by English Episcopacy; if the shadow

of fraternity abroad might be the reflection of the substance of fraternity at home. For me, it is enough, it is more than enough, if the country in which God has cast my lot can live at peace in things spiritual: fraternity with Sweden or Greece or Abyssinia is a figment to which I, a dweller at home, can no more give shape or form than I can expect to sit in one Parliament with Italy or America.

These unities are theatrical rather than substantial. I want to know what is the essence of that oneness of flock which Jesus Christ promises in the text. I tell you frankly that I find it in the oneness of the Shepherd. If *one Shepherd*, then, then only, but then at once, *one flock* likewise.

The folds of Christ will to the end be at least as many as the nations which He embraces in His cosmopolitan Gospel. We are willing to believe that not only Liturgies, not translated from the Anglican, may embody an acceptable worship, but even Creeds, neither Athanasian, nor Nicene, no nor (verbally) Apostolical, in their phraseology, may enshrine enough of the Faith to secure to the holder a Fold in the Flock. Expressions of thought, in words, must

always be imperfect; must always be more or less, as St Paul says, things of enigma, reflections in the mirror, not the very substance of the heavenly realities—these wait for the passage of the River, these wait for the knowing as we are known. If even in our Father's house are many mansions—abodes, we may interpret the saying, for every variety of character, of disposition, of history; so in the mighty kindred of the faithful are many families, each one named after the Head and Father of all; so in the vast Temple, which God shall at last occupy in manifested Presence, are many several *buildings*, each one, whether door or window or arch or buttress, a true, a constituent, an essential piece of the whole; and so, finally, in the world-wide flock are many folds—each country, each language, occupying its own, and, in some instances, the country itself, and the language, requiring more than one for its evangelical, its true-hearted children.

Depend upon it, my brethren, we have touched the true point of difference when we lay the stress of the one Flock upon the one Shepherd. Where Christ is, there is the flock—because there is the Shepherd.

Many diversities, many agreements, have a widely different significance on earth and in heaven. Questions of Church government, though we would not disparage them, cannot there be the test of exclusion or fellowship. The use of a particular Liturgy, the preference of a prescribed or an extemporaneous worship, this cannot be the criterion, as God judges, of a vital Christianity. Scarcely can the utterance, in words accurate as man can make them, of an Orthodox Creed, a Catholic Religion, be decisive in a world where word is thought and faith intuition. May there not, must there not be in heaven a vast change, almost an entire inversion, of our earthly estimates of Church-membership and Church union? Can it there be all-important, in what words, in what building, a man worshipped, or whether the instruction to which he listened below was the utterance of one set apart in this manner or in that for the ministerial work?

The Season, and the Sacrament, and the selected Scripture for Sunday and Saint's Day, conspire to render this, for to-day, the appropriate, as it is ever a momentous, question—

What is the unity which Christ promised, and for which His Church is still longing yea even fainting? How may we ourselves make sure of being *very members incorporate in the mystical body of Christ, which is the blessed company of all faithful people?* If the *one flock* is, where is the *One Shepherd*, then where is He? If the flesh is nothing, if spirit is all—if form is secondary, and language itself ambiguous—how shall we ascertain our place and standing inside that true Communion of Saints which alone is the everlasting, the indestructible Church?

We find the answer—and it is at once discriminating and spiritual — in the two brief clauses which precede and define the text—

Them also I must bring—And they shall hear my voice—

so shall there be one flock, and one Shepherd.

(1) First then, Christ must bring.

He spoke concerning a time when He should have left the earth—the time now present. Not until the descent of the Spirit did the call of the Gentiles begin. And it is of these—it is of us—that He speaks here. Therefore in each case the Risen Saviour is the power working. *I* must

bring. O wonderful festival of Easter, which commemorates the investiture of the Crucified with what St Paul calls *the power of His Resurrection!* Ill do we commonly judge of the comparative strength of the dead and living. St Peter speaks of Christ as *put to death in flesh* and at the same moment *quickened in spirit*—the very dropping of the flesh gave life to the spirit! Even the interval between Death and Resurrection was marked by an accession of strength. Straightway He took His journey in the vivified spirit, and preached to the spirits in prison. How much more, when to the quickened spirit was added an immortal body—rid for ever of the encumbrance of sense, and meet to be the doer of the Spirit's will in a region of limitless space!

It was of this state—of the time which now is—that Christ said, *I must bring.*

How faint a hold have most men upon the resurrection-life of Jesus! How few of us so much as believe that He is! that He has a will concerning this present, or strength, in earth or heaven, to do it!

Again He says, I *must* bring. There is none

else to do it. Many suppose that they can come; that they have but to will, and they are safe—safe with Christ, or safe without Christ, according to their creed—but at all events safe by their willing. It is against this error that St John protests when he says on the first page of his Gospel, *Which were born...not of the will of man.* The first condition of becoming a Christian is a sense of helplessness. I have tried, I have struggled, I have prayed—and I am not yet free; I am not yet master of myself—I am not yet victor of my sins. See the explanation. *I must bring.* None else can. Not the Church, not the minister, not the man. Lie low before the Cross, and let *the power of His resurrection* be put forth upon thee. *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

But there is another force in the *must.*

As none else can, so He must. He is under engagement. It is a part of the work to which He pledged Himself—this bringing. Whereso-ever there is a struggling soul, looking only to Him, there is He bound to help. I *must* bring—or I were false to my word.

Once again. I must *bring.* The word

describes the process, and the tense (in the Greek) points to the success. It is a process not of driving, not of compelling, but of bringing or leading. Christ puts forth upon the soul an influential and a persuasive power. Even if fear has place in it—and it often has; even if the first stage of the *bringing* be beneath overhanging rocks and mountains burning with fire; even if the earliest influence be one of terror, *How shall I endure the punishment of my sins, or live out an eternity in a self-made ruin?* still in this voice of the trumpet there was an undersong of love: *the Lord being merciful to him* was the explanation of the *Escape for thy life:* and, on the whole, the process was a leading, even if there was a strong hand upon the arm of the led; and the command to *flee to the mountains* is accompanied by the loving explanation, *I can do nothing* in judgment *till thou be come thither.*

Read in the light of this saying, *I must bring,* each page, each line, of your own little history. Understand why God would not let you alone in your sins; why He oftentimes thwarted, disappointed, crushed, your loves and your

ambitions; why, when an object was almost in your hand, He dashed it aside or palsied the grasp; why He so often led you into the wilderness, a wilderness purposely created for you, and made *the valley of Achor* your one, your only *door of hope.* In all, Christ was *bringing* you, towards His fold and towards His heaven.

(2) But there is yet another side to the promise. And that is, the consenting, though not the originating, will. *They shall hear my voice. Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power.* Christ must bring—but they must hear.

And as the bringing, so the hearing, is manifold in its fulfilment. One man listens from his youth: another stops his ear till the grey hairs are on him. One is attracted instantly by the Cross: another has passed by it a thousand times and it is nothing to him. One feels the love in time to seek it early: another needs stroke upon stroke, needs the desolation of his home, needs the very famine and destitution of his soul, before he will so much as give heed. Nevertheless, in all, the hearing of the voice is the passing from death to life.

And as the first hearing is the transition, so the continued hearing is the life. The voice speaks not once but daily; becomes, for all who will listen, the Prophet's *word behind thee*, saying, in each particular of duty, *This is the way*. A man may listen once, and then stop the ear. A man may listen to the voice when it bids him do the thing he is inclined to—the easy duty, the easy shunning—and refuse it when it summons to difficult enterprizes, or bids him cut off the hand and pluck out the eye. Then the place in the fold becomes doubtful. The going out becomes by degrees more frequent than the coming in. First the *guiding with the eye* becomes less instantly, less surely effectual. At last the voice of authority is unheard, and even the rod of fatherly chastisement fails to reclaim. The unity was gained—but it is lost again. Christ *brought*—but the man did not *listen*.

It has been the purpose of this Sermon to drop a few hints upon real and spurious unity. We make the condition of the one flock nothing else but the one Shepherd. When asked to explain, we say, that there is true union amongst

all persons who believe in Christ. Considering the inaccuracies of all language, and the infirmities of most intellects, we do not regard even errors (as we think them) of doctrinal expression fatal at once to unity. Wherever there is a real living communication between the soul and Christ, there is the root and the reality of Church-membership. Forms of worship, Articles of Religion, exercises of outward communion, may assist, they cannot supersede, they cannot even guarantee, this vital union. Careless walking, worldly living, neglect of prayer, indulgence of sin, must, by degrees slower or more speedy, break it. At last, there comes a time when the withered branch must be actually severed; severed, I mean, as to the secret supply of the Divine life; not severed, it may be, ever, in this world, as regards profession, or the *name to live.* The real and the nominal must coexist in the Church of the present. The attempt to discriminate must fail, because Christ forbids it, so long as man is the judge. *Let both grow together until the harvest.* Only, for ourselves—for all whom we influence—let this be the firm, the consistent language of the heart and of the life—

God is a Spirit—all is valueless in His sight which is not heart-deep—they who are Christ's must be so in spirit and in truth—outward union is nothing, spiritual union is all—spiritual unity is broken by sin, and he who belongs to Christ must walk in the light.

In that exercise of Christian union to which we are called this day in the Sacrament of the Supper, let us bring with us these two recollections. He who would feed there upon Christ must feed upon Him in the heart, by faith. And, He who draws nigh to that Table pledges himself thereby to have done with sinning.

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